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The Liturgical Past in Byzantium and Early Rus

SEAN GRIFFIN



THE LITURGICAL PAST IN BYZANTIUM AND EARLY RUS

The chroniclers of medieval Rus were monks, who celebrated the divine services of the Byzantine church throughout every day. This study is the first to analyse how these rituals shaped their writing of the *Rus Primary Chronicle,* the first written history of the East Slavs. During the eleventh century, chroniclers in Kiev learned about the conversion of the Roman Empire by celebrating a series of distinctively Byzantine liturgical feasts. When the services concluded, and the clerics sought to compose a native history for their own people, they instinctively drew on the sacred stories that they sang at church. The result was a myth of Christian origins for Rus – a myth promulgated even today by the Russian government – which reproduced the Christian origins myth of the Byzantine Empire. The book uncovers this ritual subtext and reconstructs the intricate web of liturgical narratives that underlie this foundational text of pre-modern Slavic civilization.

SEAN GRIFFIN is a junior fellow in the Society of Fellows at Dartmouth College. His interdisciplinary research focuses on both the most ancient and the most recent periods of Russian and Ukrainian history. He has previously been a Visiting Professor at Stanford University and was a VolkswagenStiftung fellow at Westfälische Wilhems-Universität in Münster, Germany, from 2016–17.

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I shall never forget the moment when this study was born, during a meeting of Gail Lenhoff's graduate seminar on pre-modern Russia at UCLA. The class was reading about Princess Olga's visit to Constantinople, and I mentioned that some of the language in the passage had been borrowed from the liturgy. 'I do not believe anyone has ever noticed that before', the professor responded. 'You should write a dissertation on the topic.' Nearly a decade later, I am delighted to present my adviser with the final results. If this study contains only a fraction of the erudition and rigour which has long characterized her scholarship, then it will indeed have been a worthy undertaking. The same should also be said of another of my mentors in Los Angeles, Ronald Vroon, a man whose enthusiasm, kindness, and devotion to his craft attracted me to the field of Slavic studies in the first place. I am likewise greatly indebted to those who have read and improved drafts of the work, at various stages of its development: Boris Dralyuk, Paweł Figurski,

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAN	Biblioteka Akademii nauk
BT	*Bogoslovskie Trudy*
ChIONL	*Chteniia v Istoricheskom obshchestve Nestora-letopistsa*
ChOIDR	*Chteniia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DR	*Drevniaia Rus'. Voprosy medievistiki*
GIM	Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii muzei
GMA	*Gottesdienstmenäum für den Monat April*
GMD	*Gottesdienstmenäum für den Monat Dezember*
GMF	*Gottesdienstmenäum für den Monat Februar*
HUS	*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*
IORIaS	*Izvestiia Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti*
MSON	*Sluzhebnye minei za sentiabr, oktiabr i noiabr*
OCA	*Orientalia Christiana Analecta*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
PSRL	*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*
PVL	*Povest' vremennykh let*
PE	*Pravoslavnaia entsiklopediia*
RDRLS	*Razyskaniia o drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodakh*
RGADA	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov
RNB	Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka
RR	*The Russian Review*
SEEJ	*Slavic and East European Journal*
Sin.	Sinodal'noe sobranie, GIM
SKK	*Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnosti Drevnei Rusi, vol. I, X–pervaia polovina XIV v.*
Sof.	Sobranie Sofiiskoi biblioteki, RNB
Tip.	Fond Biblioteki Moskovskoi Sinodal'noi tipografii (f. 381), RGADA
TAS	*Tipikon Patriarkha Aleksiia Studita*

TODRL	*Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoi literatury*
VV	*Vizantiiskii Vremennik*
ZhBG	*Zhitiia sviatykh muchenikov Borisa i Gleba i sluzhby im*
ZhMNP	*Zhurnal Ministervstva narodnogo prosvishcheniia*

INTRODUCTION

On an overcast afternoon in November 2016, Vladimir Putin, the president of the Russian Federation, unveiled a massive new monument just outside the walls of the Kremlin, in the heart of Moscow. Beside him at the ceremony stood Patriarch Kirill, primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, and several leading members of the capital's political and clerical elite. 'I greet and congratulate all of you with the opening of the monument to Saint Equal-of-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir,' Putin said in the televised address. 'The new monument is a tribute to our great ancestor, the esteemed saint, statesman, and warrior, the spiritual founder of the Russian state.' An enormous bronze statue, rising over sixty feet into the sky, towered over the president as he spoke. It depicted the grand prince with a gigantic cross in one hand and a sword in the other. A cap reminiscent of the *shapka* of Monomakh, the ancient symbol of Russian monarchy, adorned the saint's head. 'Vladimir's era knew many achievements,' Putin continued, 'and the most important of these, the definitive, key achievement, was the baptism of Rus.'[1]

The patriarch was next to take the podium. He too stressed the importance of Vladimir's conversion, without which, he claimed, 'there would be no Rus, no Russia, no Russian Orthodox state, no great Russian Empire, and no contemporary Russia'. Behind the patriarch, in a semicircle around the base of the sculpture, stood three bronze reliefs. Each depicted a key event in the national conversion. The first portrayed Vladimir's siege of Cherson, a port city on the Black Sea. The second depicted his baptism there at the hands of Byzantine clerics. The third showed the grand prince baptising his subjects *en masse* in Kiev in the year 988. 'Vladimir was not afraid to alter profoundly the direction

[1] A full transcription of the speeches as well as television footage of the event is available at: 'V Den' narodnogo edinstva v Moskve otkryt pamiatnik kniaziu Vladimiru', *Ofitsial'nye setevye resursy Prezidenta Rossii*, www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53211 (accessed November 2017).

of society's development,' the patriarch proclaimed. 'And this determination, this zeal for Christ and integrity in following the Gospel, made him like the apostles, even though they were separated by a thousand years.'

The ceremony concluded with a brief liturgical service. The patriarch solemnly turned and faced the massive statue. In the background, a mixed chorus triumphantly sang the troparion, the main festal hymn, from the liturgical services for Saint Vladimir:

Уподобился еси купцу, ищущему добраго бисера, славнодержавный Владимире, на высоте стола седя матере градов, богоспасаемаго Киева: испытуя же и посылая к Царскому граду уведети православную веру, обрел еси безценный бисер – Христа, избравшаго тя, яко втораго Павла, и оттрясшаго слепоту во святей купели, душевную вкупе и телесную. Темже празднуем твое успение, людие твои суще, моли спастися державы твоея Российския начальником и множеству владомых.[2]

You were like a merchant seeking a fine pearl, O glorious sovereign Vladimir. Sitting on the throne of the divinely saved Kiev, the mother of cities, you tested [the faiths] and sent servants to the Imperial City to behold the Orthodox faith. You thereby found Christ, the priceless pearl, who chose you as a second Paul, and washed away your spiritual and physical blindness in the holy font. We, your people, therefore celebrate your falling asleep. Pray that the rulers of your Russian state, and the multitude of their subjects, may be saved.

The choir concluded, and a deacon loudly intoned the opening prayer of the rite of consecration. The patriarch took up an aspergillum, the liturgical instrument used to sprinkle holy water, and blessed the statue three times with the sign of the cross. The holy water ran down the base of the monument and over the inscription chiselled there in giant Church Slavonic letters: 'Saint Prince Vladimir Baptiser of Rus'. The choir sang a second hymn, in honour of the life-creating cross, and the ceremony came to a close.

The president and patriarch looked into the television cameras that late autumn day and retold an ancient tale. The speeches, the hymns, the honorifics, the bronze reliefs, the massive cross, the inscription: all of these repeated a story about Prince Vladimir recorded in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* in the early twelfth century and subsequently used as the preface to most major chronicles for the next 500 years. It was a story many in the audience knew by heart. They had learned it in school textbooks and seen it depicted in novels, films, and cartoons. For centuries before that, their

[2] *Mineia. Mai* (Moscow, 2002), p. 186. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

ancestors had recounted it in church hymns, lives of the saints, folk songs, and epic tales.[3] To the Russians in attendance, and those watching at home, the new statue therefore symbolized more than a revered historical figure. It represented an ancient myth of origins: a myth that had taught the east Slavic peoples who they were and where they had come from since it was first committed to parchment some 900 years earlier.

THE GREAT CHURCH AND STOUDITE REFORM

Now picture a different scene. It is a bright spring morning in tenth-century Constantinople. Romans from across the city stream towards the Great Church, Hagia Sophia, where they will celebrate the feast of the city's founder and namesake, Saint Constantine the Great, and his mother Saint Helena. Inside the massive cathedral, incense rises from the altar and candles flicker before icons of the saints. The verses of the fiftieth psalm echo across the vast domed sanctuary.[4] The chant concludes and a choir of nearly 200 voices takes up the troparion of the feast:[5]

Τοῦ Σταυροῦ σου τὸν τύπον ἐν οὐρανῷ θεασάμενος, καὶ ὡς ὁ Παῦλος τὴν κλῆσιν οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δεξάμενος, ὁ ἐν βασιλεῦσιν, Ἀπόστολός σου Κύριε, Βασιλεύουσαν πόλιν τῇ χειρί σου παρέθετο, ἣν περίσωζε διὰπαντὸς ἐν εἰρήνῃ, πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, κάὶ ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.[6]

Beholding the image of your cross in the sky, and like Paul receiving a call not from men, your apostle among kings placed the Imperial City in your hands, O Lord. Preserve it ever in peace, through the supplications of the Mother of God, and have mercy on us.

The patriarch of Constantinople, clothed in elaborate vestments, presides over the matins service. He is joined at the ceremony by the emperor, his retinue, and members of the senate.[7] Together they prepare to lead a liturgical procession of thousands across the city.

One last litany is said, and the holy parade begins. The patriarch and the emperor descend the steps of the Great Church and proceed towards the

[3] On the figure of Saint Vladimir in medieval and modern Russian culture, see F. Butler, *Enlightener of Rus': The Image of Vladimir Sviatoslavovich across the Centuries* (Bloomington, 2002).

[4] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, ed. J. Mateos (Rome, 1962–63), vol. I, p. XXIV.

[5] B. V. Pentcheva, 'Liturgy and Music at Hagia Sophia', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, www.religion.oxfordre.com. On the relationship between music and architecture in the Great Church, see B. V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park, 2017).

[6] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, p. 296.

[7] J. F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome, 1987), p. 225.

Church of the Holy Apostles, the final resting place of Constantine and Helena.[8] Along the route, they visit various shrines and monuments. Cantors chant psalms and sing hymns, and the clergy recite prayers.[9] The sacred story that began at vespers the night before, and continued at matins, is now proclaimed on the city streets. At each station, amidst the incense and icons, the clergy ritually retell the story of the conversion of the Roman Empire. They sing of Constantine's miraculous conversion and military triumph, of his victory over paganism and unique election into the ranks of the apostles. They praise Helena's wisdom and commemorate her miraculous finding of the 'true cross'. Finally, arriving at the doors of *Agioi Apostoloi*, the patriarch enters the church and celebrates the divine mysteries. The hymns for the imperial pair are chanted once more, this time at the site of their imperial tomb. The thrice-holy refrain of the Trisagion is sung, and the Eucharist distributed.[10] Several hours after departing from Hagia Sophia, the patriarch at last delivers the benediction. The annual imperial commemoration of Constantine the Great and his mother Helena draws to an end, to be repeated again the next year, just as it had been every year, since possibly as early as the fifth century.[11]

The *asmatike akolouthia*, or sung office, of the Great Church was not the only form of liturgy celebrated in Constantinople on this day.[12] Throughout the city, a number of less lavish monastic rites were also served, even as the emperor and patriarch paraded through the streets.[13] In earlier eras, the *akolouthia ton akoimeton*, or office of the sleepless monks, had held sway in the Byzantine capital, but by the tenth century this tradition had largely given way to a revised set of practices associated with the Monastery of Stoudios. In the year 799 a charismatic abbot named Theodore led his monks out of Bithynia, on account of the Arab invasions, and settled in this dying monastic establishment near the Sea of Marmara.[14] He subsequently summoned a group of monks from the Lavra of Saint Sabbas, in the Judean desert between Jerusalem and the

[8] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, p. 296. See also N. Teteriatnikov, 'The True Cross Flanked by Constantine and Helena: A Study in the Light of Post-Iconoclastic Re-Evaluation of the Cross', *Deltion XAE*, 18 (1995), pp. 169–88.

[9] Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship*, pp. 205–25.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 225.

[11] The canonization of Constantine is surrounded by uncertainty. It may have occurred as early as the fifth century or as late as the ninth. See G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 143–44.

[12] On the existence of multiple rites in a single city, see D. Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford, 2018), pp.5–7.

[13] J. C. Anderson and S. Parenti, *A Byzantine Monastic Office, AD 1105* (Washington DC, 2016) pp. 257–58.

[14] On the Monastery of Stoudios and its saintly founder, see R. Cholij, *Theodore the Stoudite: The Ordering of Holiness* (Oxford, 2002).

Dead Sea, and together they revitalized the monastery and initiated a series of ground-breaking liturgical reforms.[15]

For centuries, the church services in Jerusalem and Constantinople had exercised a complex, mutual influence on one another.[16] The imperial cathedral rite was distinguished by its ritual grandeur and choral sophistication; the Palestinian rite by its sombre prayer, ascetic rigour, and extensive psalmody.[17] In the ninth century, partly in an effort to combat iconoclasm, Theodore and his followers gradually fused these two traditions together.[18] They grafted the twenty-four-hour cycle of desert monastic worship, with its numerous psalms, canons, and hymns, onto the skeleton of litanies and prayers said within the altar of the Great Church. The result was a new hybrid rite, the so-called Stoudite synthesis, which was to define eastern Christian worship for the next half millennium.[19]

A tenth-century spectator, accustomed to the cathedral office, might have been struck by the number of books involved in the monastic ceremonies. Churchmen at Hagia Sophia prayed from long and unwieldy scrolls, measuring up to sixteen metres in length.[20] Clerics of the Stoudite federation, on the other hand, chanted from a variety of more recent liturgical anthologies, such as the Menaion, Triodion, and Octoechos.[21] These books contained thousands of original hymns, composed over the course of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries by Palestinian hymnodists, such as Saint Cosmos and Saint John of Damascus, and their

15 R. Taft, *A Short History of the Byzantine Rite* (Collegeville, 1992), pp. 52–53. T. Pott, *Byzantine Liturgical Reform: A Study of Liturgical Change in the Byzantine Tradition* (Crestwood, 2010), pp. 135–60.

16 See Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization*, pp. 1–73.

17 See G. M. Hanke, *Vesper und Orthros des Kathedralritus der Hagia Sophia zu Konstantinopel: Eine strukturanalytische und entwicklungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Psalmodie und der Formulare in den Euchologien*, Inauguraldissertation zu Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines Doktors der Theologie (Frankfurt am Main, 2002); S. Parenti, 'The Cathedral Rite of Constantinople: Evolution of a Local Tradition', *OCP*, 77 (2011), pp. 449–69.

18 M. Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni v drevnerusskikh sluzhebnikakh studiiskoi epokhi', *BT*, 43/44 (2012), pp. 443–44. Pott, *Byzantine Liturgical Reform*, p. 153. On the history of iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire, see L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850* (Cambridge, 2012) and L. Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London, 2012). On the western response to the crisis, see T. F. X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2012).

19 Taft, *A Short History*, pp. 55–67.

20 M. Arranz, *Evkhologii Konstantinopolia v nachale XI veka* (Rome/Moscow, 2003), p. 13. See also S. Gerstel, 'Liturgical Scrolls in the Byzantine Sanctuary', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 35 (1994), pp. 195–204.

21 On the historical development of these books, see A. Iu. Nikiforovna, *Iz istorii Minei v Vizantii: Gimnograficheskie pamiatniki VIII–XII vv. iz sobraniia Monastyria Sviatoi Ekateriny na Sinae* (Moscow, 2013); O. A. Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh sv. Klimenta arkhiepiskopa* Okhridskogo (Moscow, 2006); I. A. Karabinov, *Postnaia Triod': Istoricheskii* obzor *ee plana, sostava, redaktsii i slavianskikh perevodov* (St Petersburg, 1910).

Stoudite epigones, such as Saint Joseph.[22] The newer materials did not necessarily contradict or eliminate the contents of earlier rites, so much as they built and expanded upon them. The Stoudites continued to celebrate the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena, for instance, and the sacred story grew only more elaborate under their management, as additional genres of hymnody, such as stichera and canons, were added to the office.

SLAVONIC CHURCH BOOKS

The monastic rites were not simply more extensive. They also had the advantage of being highly portable. When the Byzantine faith spread to new lands, it was therefore these more austere services, and not the sumptuous pageant of the Great Church, which came to be celebrated in both monasteries and cathedrals alike.[23] The services imported into early Rus are a good case study in this regard. Since the mid-nineteenth century, historians of eastern Christian worship have put forward a number of competing theories about the origins of Slavonic liturgy in Kiev.[24] Some have suggested that purely Constantinopolitan practices prevailed there, while others have argued for the influence of a different regional tradition, which they have variously attributed to locales as far-ranging as Mount Sinai, Mount Athos, eastern and western Bulgaria, and southern Italy.[25]

Perhaps the most persuasive research has been carried out only recently, within the last decade, at the Moscow Theological Academy. In a series of independent and highly technical studies, two Russian liturgists, Aleksei Pentkovskii and Mikhail Zheltov, have substantially rewritten the history of how Byzantine church books arrived

[22] Nikiforovna, *Iz istorii Minei v Vizantii*, pp. 192–93. A. M. Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie i slavianskaia gimnografiia vizantiiskogo obriada v X veke', in H. Rothe and D. Christians (eds.), *Liturgische Hymnen nach byzantinischem Ritus bei den Slaven in ältester Zeit. Beitrage einer internationalen Tagung Bonn, 7.10. Juni 2005*, (Paderborn, 2007), p. 17.

[23] Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie i slavianskaia gimnografiia', p. 18.

[24] For a summary of the discussion, see T. I. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v slavianskoi traditsii (po sluzhebnikam XI–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 2015), pp. 8–22.

[25] A. A. Dmitrievskii, *Bogosluzhenie v Russkoi Tserkvi za pervye piat' vekov* (Kazan, 1883). M. A. Lisitsyn, *Pervonachal'nyi slaviano-russkii Tipikon* (St Petersburg, 1911). M. Arranz, 'Les grandes etapes de la liturgie byzantine: Palestine-Byzance-Russie – Essai d'apercu historique', in *Liturgie de l'Eglise particuliere, liturgie de l'Eglise universelle* (Rome, 1976), vol. VII, pp. 43–72. M. A. Momina, 'Problema pravki slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh gimnograficheskikh knig na Rusi v XI stoletii', *TODRL*, 45 (1992), pp. 200–19. A. S. Slutskii, 'Vizantiiskie liturgicheskie chiny "Soedineniia Darov" i "Teploty". Rannie slavianskie versii', *VV*, 65 (Moscow, 2006), pp. 126–45. T. I. Afanas'eva, 'Osobennosti posledovaniia liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v drevnerusskikh Sluzhebnikakh XIII–XIV vv.', *Ruthenica*, 6 (2007), pp. 207–42.

in Rus.[26] Previously, it was thought that the main complex of early Rus church books had been translated in Kiev, at one time and in one place, from Stoudite originals brought directly from Constantinople.[27] Upon closer examination, however, it turns out that the earliest Rus manuscripts do not precisely conform to the monastic practices then prevalent in the Imperial City.[28] On the contrary, the services performed in eleventh-century Kiev appear to have been based on a different and now-lost Greek liturgical tradition: one that was built upon the hybrid Stoudite system, but which also retained a variety of minor regional differences.[29] Pentkovskii and Zheltov locate this little-studied Byzantine tradition to the west of Constantinople, in the northern provinces of the Greek mainland, between the Thermaic Gulf and Adriatic Sea. They conclude that the earliest Rus liturgical books therefore preserved the unique, local practices of the archdiocese of Thessalonica, or a diocese still farther to the north, in Epirus or southern Albania.[30]

Yet one should not imagine that Greek-language service books were driven straight from north-western Byzantium through the gates of Kiev. A crucial link connected the two regions: that of the lakeside city of Ohrid, in the far western reaches of the First Bulgarian Empire.[31] It was there, in the final decade of the ninth century, that two 'bishops of the Slavonic tongue', Saint Klement and Naum of Ohrid, oversaw the first

[26] See Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie i slavianskaia gimnografiia', pp. 16–26; A. M. Pentkovskii, 'K istorii Slavianskogo bogosluzheniia vizantiiskogo obriada v nachal'nyi period (kon. IX–nach. X v.): Dva drevnikh slavianskikh kanona arkhangelu Mikhailu', BT, 43–44 (2012), pp. 401–42; A. M. Pentkovskii, 'Okhrid na Rusi': Drevnerusskie bogosluzhebnye knigi kak istochnik dlia rekonstruktsii liturgicheskoi traditsii Okhridsko-Prespanskogo regiona v X–XI stoletiiakh', *Zbornik na trudovi od Megunarodniot nauchen sober* (Skopje, 2014), pp. 43–65; A. M. Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie vizantiiskogo obriada i korpus slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh knig v kontse IX–pervoi polovine X vekov', *Slověne*, 2 (2016), pp. 54–120; M. Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', *BT*, 41 (2007), pp. 272–359; M. Zheltov, 'Molitvy vo vremia prichashcheniia sviashchennosluzhitelei v drevnerusskikh Sluzhebnikakh XIII–XIV v.', *DR*, 35 (2009), pp. 75–92; M. Zheltov, 'Chiny obrucheniia i venchaniia v drevneishikh slavianskikh rukopisiakh, *Palaeobulgarica*, 1 (2010), pp. 25–43; M. Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', pp. 443–70; M. Zheltov, 'Liturgicheskaia traditsiia zapada Vizantii v drevneishikh russkikh sluzhebnikakh', in I. Velev (ed.), *Zbornik na trudovi od Megunarodniot nauchen sober* (Skopje, 2014), pp. 249–54.

[27] Momina, 'Problema pravki', pp. 217–19. E. M. Vereshchagin and V. B. Krys'ko, 'Nabliudeniia nad iazikom i tekstom arkhaichnogo istochnika – Il'inoi knigi', *Voprosy iazykoznaniia*, 2–3 (1999), pp. 3–26, 38–59. *TAS*, ed. A. M. Pentkovskii (Moscow, 2001), pp. 158–59. M. Zheltov, 'Bogosluzhenie Russkoi Tserkvi X–XX vv.', in *PE* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 495–517.

[28] Pentkovskii, 'Okhrid na Rusi', pp. 48–99. Zheltov, 'Liturgicheskaia traditisiia zapada Vizantii', pp. 249–50.

[29] Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', p. 444.

[30] *Ibid*., pp. 468–70. Pentkovskii, 'Okhrid na Rusi', pp. 58–59.

[31] Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie vizantiiskogo obriada i korpus slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh knig', pp. 63–77.

translations of the Byzantine rite into their native language.[32] These former disciples of Saints Methodius and Cyril were not content merely to translate east Roman hymnody, however. They were also keen to write sacred songs of their own.[33] Thus, it was from their pens that the earliest Slavonic-language compositions emerged: canons in honour of the Virgin Mary, Saint Clement of Rome, and Saint Dmitrii of Thessalonica, stichera for Christmas and Epiphany, generic services for a general Menaion, and many others.[34]

The impact of Klement and Naum's missionary labours was eventually felt beyond the rocky slopes of the southern Balkans. At the close of the tenth century, Prince Vladimir accepted baptism from the eastern church, and it was their translations of the church books that were transported directly from Ohrid into Kiev.[35] The Slavonic-language services that first rang out in the monasteries of south-western Bulgaria were therefore also the first liturgical rites to be celebrated in the land of Rus. Although additional redactions of the services were later made in Kiev, apparently in an effort to bring native books into conformity with then-current Stoudite practices, an entirely new translation from the Greek was never carried out.[36] As a result, for roughly the next 300 years, whenever the clergy and people of Kiev gathered together and worshipped their God, they sang the ancient songs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, according to the slightly modified customs of north-western Byzantium, using translations made by south Slavic hierarchs in Macedonia.

The history of eastern Christian liturgy was truly a 'global' or 'transnational' event, and yet the purpose of these rituals within the broader medieval Mediterranean remains critically understudied outside the rather specialized discipline of oriental liturgiology. One of the aims of this book, therefore, is to acquaint readers with the solemn, mysterious, and sometimes bizarre religious rituals of the middle Byzantine Empire and its ecclesiastical satellites on the northern periphery. With that end in mind, I have chosen to engage with early medieval liturgical manuscripts

[32] Pentkovskii, 'Okhrid na Rusi', pp. 51–55, and 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie i slavianskaia gimnografiia', p. 24.

[33] On the role of Methodius and Cyril in the translation of Latin and Byzantine church books, see A. M. Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie v arkhiepiskopii sviatitelia Mefodiia, in J. Radich and V. Savich (eds.), *Sancti Cyrillus et Methodius et hereditas Slavic litteraria DCCCLXIII–MMXII* (Belgrade, 2014) pp. 25–102.

[34] Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie vizantiiskogo obriada i korpus slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh knig', pp. 64–70, 84–90. See also Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh*, pp. 39–225.

[35] Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie i slavianskaia gimnografiia', p. 25, and 'Okhrid na Rusi', pp. 56–59.

[36] Pentkovskii, 'Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie vizantiiskogo obriada i korpus slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh knig', pp. 97–99.

in a perhaps novel way: not as the source material for purely linguistic or liturgiological debate, but as the instruction manuals, the guidebooks, for reconstructing a long-overlooked dimension of pre-modern society. These reconstructions are not undertaken for their own sake, however, because this is not principally a book about ritual qua ritual. My primary concern is with the power that liturgy retained outside the walls of the church, when early medieval clerics returned from the services and began to think about the past. I shall therefore resist the temptation to treat church books solely as objects of textual inquiry, sealed off from the rest of the world, like a hermit in his cell. For in my view, it is not only the historical trajectory of these books that is deserving of attention, nor the technical minutiae of differing regional practices. I am convinced that one should also take into account the very special kind of stories that these sacred books contained within them, and which came to life each and every day, whenever the officiating clergy entered the altar, prepared the incense, and performed the sacred rites.[37]

THE ROMAN PAST IN EARLY RUS

Let us consider the services that were celebrated in Kiev every year on 21 May. The priests and monks of the city awoke and assembled for morning worship, just as they did any other day of the year.[38] At that moment, while they venerated icons and assumed their places in church, the great walls of Constantinople stood nearly a thousand miles to the south. There was no emperor or patriarch at hand, no grand processions being prepared along porticoed streets, no ornate Roman banners or imperial tombs. Yet once the opening blessing was intoned, the clergy and the choir began to chant many of the same hymns that were sung that day at the Monastery of Stoudios and in thousands of other churches across the empire. These songs were being chanted hundreds of miles beyond the northernmost Byzantine frontier, and yet they were devoted to the founders of new Rome, Saints Constantine and Helena:

Свѣтъ свѣтьлыи • звѣзда невечерьнѧѧ • отъ невърнѧ въ разоумъ • божествьныи пришьдъ • приведенъ бысть освѧтиті люди и градъ • и образъ крьста • на небеси оузьрѣвъ • оуслыша отътоудоу • симь побѣжаи врагы твоѩ • тѣм приимъ • разоумъ доуховьныи чиститель бысть и цьсарь • милостию оутвьрдивъ • цьркъвь хрьстовоу • правовѣрьныихъ

[37] On the narrative aspects of Byzantine liturgy, see D. Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium* (Philadelphia, 2014).

[38] For evidence that liturgical services were indeed performed every day, see Pentkovskii, ‘Slavianskoe bogosluzhenie vizantiiskogo obriada i korpus slavianskikh bogosluzhebnykh knig’, pp. 71–72.

цьсарь отьць • егоже рака • ицѣлениꙗ точить • костѧнтине равьне апостоломъ • съ материю богомоудрою • молисѧ о доушахъ нашихъ.[39]

The all-radiant light and never-waning star, passing from unbelief to divine understanding, was led to sanctify his people and city. And beholding the image of the cross in the sky, he heard therefrom: 'By this conquer your enemies!' And so, having received spiritual understanding as a priest and king, you have mercifully established the church of Christ, O father of all right-believing kings, whose relics pour forth healing. O Constantine, equal of the apostles, with your divinely wise mother, pray for our souls.

Thus, like their counterparts in Constantinople, Thessalonica, and Ohrid, every year on this feast day, the clergymen in Rus went to church and ritually retold the story of Christian origins of the Roman Empire. They too sang of the weapon of the cross and the triumph of a saintly emperor and equal-of-the-apostles. They too chanted hymns about a miraculous conversion and a devout imperial mother. As time passed, and the services were celebrated over and over again, these songs began to shape the clergy's conception of more than the imperial Roman past. They began to shape their ideas about the native past and the Christian beginnings of their own people.

While standing in the sanctuary and praying, or singing with the choir on the kliros, the clerics learned about the saintly deeds of Constantine and Helena, and we can surmise that their thoughts drifted to the deeds of their own baptiser, Vladimir, and his grandmother Olga.[40] Indeed, by the time these clerics set about writing the first native history, the liturgical rites had already taught them what a local myth of Christian origins should look like. They had spent thousands of hours praying and singing about the conversion of the Romans, and they naturally drew on this experience when describing the conversion of the Rus.

We can envisage the chroniclers serving the rites in church, removing their vestments in the sacristy, walking back to their writing stations, and preparing their pens and inkpots.[41] Perhaps they were working on the original story of the baptism of Rus, or perhaps they were editing and adding to an earlier version. The precise details of what transpired are unknown and unknowable. We can only speculate about the chroniclers'

[39] Mineia sluzhebnaia na mai, notirovannaia, Sin. 166, 124.1, ed. A. S. Alenchenkovaia, D. S. Kornilovaia, E. P. Galeevaia, and B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=26361893 (accessed December 2017).

[40] On the early images of Constantine and Helena, see A. Kazhdan, 'Constantin Imaginaire: Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great', *Byzantion*, 57 (1987), pp. 196–250; A. Harbus, *Helena of Brittany in Medieval Legend* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 9–27.

[41] On the mechanics of writing in early Rus, see D. Likhachev, *Tekstologiia: Na material russkoi literatury X–XVII vekov* (Leningrad, 1983), p. 60

actual thoughts, methods, or intentions. Nor can we be certain about who wrote the extant tale, when exactly it was written, or where. Barring a major textual discovery, such specifics will remain the arena of never-ending doubts and debates. Yet the exact names and dates associated with the story's creation are perhaps less important than scholars have long believed.[42] The story of the baptism of Rus did not originate in the mind of a single scribe or even within a single monastery. I suggest in this book that it was the product of a liturgical myth-making tradition that had developed for centuries in the eastern Roman Empire before being installed in Rus at the end of the first millennium.

Year after year, the clerics in Kiev went to church and sang the imperial Roman conversion myths. At some point in the mid-eleventh to early twelfth century, these churchmen returned from the services, readied their pens, and wrote down a similar myth for their own community. Their tale focused on four main figures, all members of the ruling dynasty, and all later recognized as saints by the Russian Orthodox Church. The story began with the baptism of Princess Olga in Constantinople in the mid-tenth century. It continued with the conversion of her grandson, Prince Vladimir, some thirty-five years later. It concluded with the martyrdom of two of Vladimir's sons, Princes Boris and Gleb, in the year of their father's passing, 1015. Together these passages formed a myth of Christian origins for the land of Rus that faithfully reproduced the myth of Christian origins for the Roman Empire. The first chroniclers invented a tale of national conversion, and as I shall document in the chapters to come, they based much of that tale, although certainly not all of it, on the myths they knew from the East Roman church books.

It was therefore very fitting that the spectacle in Moscow in 2016 ended with a brief liturgical service. For unbeknownst to those gathered there, the myth of Saint Vladimir they commemorated on that November day had its origins, over a thousand years earlier, in the ancient liturgical rites of the Byzantine Empire. The myth had come to Rus on the breath of liturgical chant and found its way into the land's foundational written history. But the story does not end there. The myths about Vladimir and his kin recorded in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* later went on to become the myths chanted at their liturgical services. The deeds of the princely clan recounted in the chronicle became the deeds recounted in the native Rus church books. Liturgy became history and became liturgy again. It was this process, this liturgical loop, which ultimately helped

[42] A detailed reconstruction of the chronicle's making, as well as an overview of the history of chronicle studies in Russia and the West, is provided in Chapter 2.

Vladimir's dynasty make the momentous transition from the ranks of earthly rulers to the communion of the saints.

The massive bronze statue now towering over Borovitskaia Square thus symbolizes something more than modern Russian identity or Putin's political agenda in Ukraine. It also attests to the profoundly important relationship that existed between liturgy and historiography in the Christian Middle Ages. Church books and history books were intimately connected in eleventh- and twelfth-century Kiev, and their relationship was rooted in the basic conditions of the era's material culture and social hierarchy. It is a simple but crucial fact: the men who wrote history and the men who served the liturgy were one and the same. They copied church books and celebrated the services. They copied history books and wrote new passages. When we begin to consider the consequences of this arrangement, and we begin to perceive how perceptions of the past flowed out of the liturgy, into the chronicle, and back into the liturgy once more, it leads us to the very heart of how history was made and disseminated in early Rus.

What we need to determine, therefore, is how significantly the consumption of history differed from the way many scholars have imagined it to be. Modern historians sit and read history from a book, and they have naturally assumed their early medieval predecessors did likewise. They have pictured the chronicler sitting at his desk, surrounded by earlier Byzantine chronicles and other historiographical materials, busily composing, redacting, and compiling the first native historical records. This image is not incorrect, but it is probably incomplete. For the chroniclers in Kiev were worshippers first and writers second. I contend that they spent far more of their lives praying at liturgy than they did hunched over a history book. Thus, one of the central questions investigated in this study is whether the 'historiographical past' contained in books was really the primary source of information for the clerics writing history in eleventh- and twelfth-century Rus. Rather, we need to consider the degree to which their conception of history reflected not only the materials studied in the scriptorium, but also those chanted at church. We need to take into account not only the textual past, but also the 'liturgical past' that these clerics performed daily during the divine services. This was the past of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of Mary, Jesus Christ, and the apostles; of Roman martyrs, anchorites, emperors, and church fathers. My hypothesis is that historiography first arose in Kiev as an attempt to make the local past conform to this liturgical past, and my evidence for this supposition is the myth of Christian origins in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*.

In the pages that follow, I shall put forward a new theory about the relationship between liturgy and historiography in early medieval Rus. This is perhaps ironic, because in the process of writing this book the theory came last, not first. The project began as a traditional philological search for subtexts, and this empirical methodology remains the foundation. The core chapters of the study are principally devoted to the textual 'excavation' of a single historiographical manuscript. In a series of close readings, I uncover the intricate web of liturgical subtexts underlying ten passages in the earliest East Slavic chronicle. But just as an archaeological dig begins with the tiniest of finds, and then grows to reveal things greater, so the philological excavations at the heart of this work will gradually reveal a dimension of Kievan culture that has long been overlooked. For once the passages have been parsed, and the subtexts identified, what should become clear is that liturgy did not merely influence how history was written and interpreted in early Rus. If my hypothesis is indeed correct, liturgy was the experience of history itself.

We should further bear in mind that the situation in Kiev was not unique. All across the continent, from Constantinople to Aachen to Roskilde, clerics served the liturgy and returned to their scriptoria to copy down the past. The themes addressed in this study are therefore relevant not only for a single princedom on the Dnieper but, very possibly, for the whole of medieval Christendom. This is particularly true where the rites of the church are concerned. The picture of liturgy that emerges in this book is not that of an esoteric and incomprehensible pageant, hidden away in the cloisters of the clerical elite. Rather, it is a picture of a very public and very powerful imperial Roman technology. It was a technology that was installed in new lands and that gradually colonized, or *converted*, the historical imagination of the indigenous population.

Wherever a steeple rose above a city skyline, and wherever church bells were heard, the clergy and the people gathered together and performed the sacred rites. Christianity and liturgy were utterly synonymous, regardless of where one was standing on the continent. The study of Byzantine liturgy in Kiev therefore promises to shed new light on some of the period's most universal questions: how cultural memory was shaped and manipulated; why rulers converted to foreign religions and installed foreign rites; what canonization truly meant and how it was achieved; how new ethno-political identities were born; and, finally, how liturgy and historiography worked together to help create and sustain imagined political communities.

But our story does not begin with these far-reaching theoretical questions. It begins somewhere quite different: aboard a Viking ship, ploughing the cold waters of the *Mare Balticum*, headed for the dangerous waterways and dense forests of the East European plain.

Chapter 1

LITURGY AND HISTORY IN EARLY RUS

The Viking Rus landed on the southern shores of the Gulf of Finland sometime near the turn of the eighth century. These were Varangians from across the Baltic Sea bound together by commercial interests and not necessarily a united tribe.[1] They were traders, raiders, hunters, trappers, and fishermen, moving in small bands across a vast wilderness, nomadic Scandinavians in the midst of Slav and Finno-Ugrian tribes.[2] The Rus initially kept to the far north, between the Baltic and the Middle Volga, where they established a network of trading settlements in the thick forests around Lake Ilmen.[3] But the promise of silk and silver lured them ever southwards, and as the century progressed they sought a trading base nearer to the rich marketplaces of Byzantium, Khazaria, and the Arab Caliphate, where they exchanged northern furs and slaves for the exotica of the Mediterranean.[4]

This ambition was realized in the second half of the ninth century when the Rus captured a former Khazar garrison hundreds of miles to the

[1] On the 'Varangian controversy', see S. Plokhii, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 10–13; V. Ia. Petrukhin, *Rus' v IX–X vekakh: Ot prezvaniia variagov do vybora very* (Moscow, 2014), pp. 137–202. On the history of the scholarly debate, see A. A. Khlevov, *Normanskaia problema v otechestvennoi istoricheskoi nauke* (St Petersburg, 1997).

[2] The role of economic trade in bringing the Scandinavians south was first emphasized in V. O. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii* (St Petersburg, 1904). For more recent treatments, see F. B. Uspenskii, *Skandinavy – Variagi – Rus': Istoriko-filologicheskie ocherki* (Moscow, 2002); A. Tolochko, *Ocherki Nachal'noi Rusi* (Kiev, 2015), pp. 81–172; C. Zuckerman, 'Deux étapes de la formation de l'ancien État russe', in M. Kazanski, A. Nersessian, C. Zuckerman (eds.), *Les centres proto-urbains russes entre Scandinavie, Byzance et Orient* (Paris, 2000), pp. 95–120.

[3] On the archaeological discoveries in this region, see N. Makarov, *Arkheologiia severnorusskoi derevni X–XIII vekov*, vols. I–III (Moscow, 2007–2009). On the pre-history of the Slavs, see F. Curta, *The Making of the Slavs: History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500–700* (Cambridge, 2004).

[4] S. Franklin and J. Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus* (London, 1996), pp. 26–138. On the importance of the fur trade, see J. Martin, *Treasure of the Land of Darkness: The Fur Trade and its Significance for Medieval Russia* (Cambridge, 1986).

south, near the frontiers of the Eurasian steppe.[5] The garrison was called Kiev and it stood on the banks of the Dnieper, at the midpoint of the 'Route from the Varangians to the Greeks', the famous 1,500-mile waterway connecting the Baltic and the Black Sea.[6] Over the next 200 years, this remote, multi-ethnic, and multilingual military outpost would grow to become the ruling centre of the largest political community in early medieval Europe: the land of Rus, or 'Kievan Rus', as it is often called by modern historians.[7]

The impetus for Kiev's rise was possibly linked to the emergence of Constantinople as the economic capital of Eurasia. Under the rule of the Macedonian emperors, in the late ninth century the Byzantine navy defeated the Arab fleets and regained control over the Mediterranean.[8] Kiev was well positioned to benefit from the Roman victory, and in the opinion of some scholars, it soon became a key trading outpost of the resurgent Byzantine economy.[9] Other historians, however, strongly resist characterizing the city as a satellite of the so-called Byzantine Commonwealth and prefer to emphasize its economic and marital connections to other parts of Europe and the Near East.[10]

[5] On the Khazars and Rus, see B. A. Rybakov, *Rus' i Khazariia (K istoricheskoi geografii Khazarii* (Moscow, 1952); A. P. Novosel'tsev, *Khazarskoe gosudarstvo i ego rol' v istorii Vostochnoi Evropy i Kavkaza* (Moscow, 1990); V. Ia. Petrukhin, 'Khazaria and Rus': An Examination of their Historical Relations', in P. Golden, H. Ben-Shammai, and A. Roná-Tas (eds.), *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 245–68.

[6] The significance of this route was popularized in nineteenth-century Russian historiography. See S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen*, vol. I (St Petersburg, 1851). For a more recent re-evaluation, see Tolochko, *Ocherki nachal'noi Rusi*, pp. 81–92. On the archaeological evidence for such a passage, see G. S. Lebedev and I. Zhvitashvili, *Drakon Nebo: Na Puti iz Variag v Greki – arkheologo-navigatsionnye issledovaniia drevnykh vodnykh kommunikatsii mezhdu Baltikoi i Sredizemnomor'em* (St Petersburg, 2000).

[7] In the year 1200, the population of Kiev has been estimated at 50,000 or higher. By comparison, Paris had at that time about 50,000 inhabitants, while London had an estimated population of 30,000. See M. F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917* (Princeton, 1993), p. 3.

[8] J. H. Pryor, 'Byzantium and the Sea: Byzantine Fleets and the History of the Empire in the Age of the Macedonian Emperors, c. 900–1025', in J. B. Hattendorf and R. W. Unger (eds.), *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 83–105. For the Arab view of the medieval Mediterranean, see C. Picard, *Sea of the Caliphs: The Mediterranean in the Medieval Islamic World* (Cambridge, 2018).

[9] O. Pritsak, *The Origins of Rus* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 270. Dmitrii Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971).

[10] See V. T. Pashto, *Vneshniaia politika Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1968); A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki, kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh sviazei IX–XII vekov* (Moscow, 2001); I. H. Garipzanov, P. J. Geary, and P. Urbańczyk, *Franks, Northmen, and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2008); A. F. Litvina and F. Uspenskii, *Traektorii traditsii: Glavy iz istorii dinastii i tserkvi na Rusi kon. XI–nach. XIII veka* (Moscow, 2010); C. Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus' in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, 2012). For an English-language introduction to the debate, see C. Raffensperger, 'The Place of Rus' in Medieval Europe', *History Compass*, 12, 11 (2014), pp. 853–65.

Kiev was without question diverse and cosmopolitan. Varangians and Slavs intermingled with itinerant Finno-Ugrians, Khazars, Bulgars, Hungarians, and the occasional Czech, German, and Arab visitor.[11] It was also far enough south that the Rus, formerly nomads of the sea, were now within a day's ride of the nomads of the steppe, in a river basin inhabited by East Slav tribes. The Rus had little choice but to adapt to their new surroundings, and they gradually assimilated with the native population. By the middle of the tenth century, Kiev was a city of mostly East Slav subjects, ruled by a now Slavic-speaking Scandinavian dynasty, whose princes bore the title of *khagan* after the fashion of their Khazar predecessors.[12] These *khagans* ventured out from the city to extort tribute from nearby Slav tribes and to trade or make war with the Pechenegs, the nomadic steppe warriors who roamed the 'open field' to the south-east.[13]

Yet regardless of how one interprets the geopolitical orientation of the Rus within the broader medieval world, there can be little doubt that the river route to Byzantium remained an important source of sustenance.[14] Every spring, as soon as the thaw came, merchants from Kiev braved dangerous rapids and the still greater danger of Pecheneg raids in order to reach the imperial capital and trade at its markets.[15] That the Rus prized this relationship with Constantinople is confirmed by the regularity with which they besieged the great city. Five times during the tenth century they went to war against the empire and at least three of those campaigns were aimed at the capital.[16] Although the northerners never breached the city's walls, what they failed to take by force they eventually gained through imports and imitation.

In the year 988, or thereabouts, Prince Vladimir accepted baptism from the church in Constantinople. This was as much a conversion of culture as of the spirit. Over the next several decades, a massive Byzantine-style

[11] On the Arab perspectives of Rus, see T. J. Hraundal, 'New Perspectives on Eastern Vikings/Rus in Arabic Sources', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 10 (2014), pp. 65–98. On the diversity of medieval eastern Europe, see F. Curta and R. Kovalev (eds.), *The Other Europe in the Middle Ages: Avars, Bulgars, Khazars and Cumans* (Leiden, 2008).

[12] On the controversial title of *khagan*, see A. P. Novosel'tsev, 'K voprosu ob odnom iz drevneishikh titulov russkogo kniazia', *Istoriia SSSR*, 4 (1982), pp. 150–59.

[13] On the relations between steppe tribes and Rus, see P. P. Tolochko, *Kochevye narody stepei i Kievskaia Rus'* (St Petersburg, 2003); Charles J. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 10–60.

[14] B. A. Rybakov, 'Torgovlia i torgovye puti', in *Istoriia kul'tury Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1951), vol. I, p. 338.

[15] On the status of Rus traders in Constantinople, see G. G. Litavrin, 'O iuridicheskom statuse drevnikh rusov v Vizantii v X stoletii', in *Vizantiiskoe ocherki* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 60–82; G. G. Litavrin, 'Usloviia prebyvaniia drevnikh rusov v Konstantinopole v X v. i ikh iuridecheskii status', *VV*, 54 (1993), pp. 81–92; F. Androshchuk, 'Konstantinopol'skie monastyri sv. Mamanta i mesto rezidentsii ruskikh kuptsov v X veke', *Ruthenica*, 11 (2012), pp. 7–28.

[16] Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, p. 184.

religious infrastructure was erected in Kiev. Cathedrals and monasteries were built. Bishops and priests were trained. Icons and church books were imported. By no later than the mid-eleventh century, citizens entered Kiev through Golden Gates and beheld a great domed cathedral dedicated to Saint Sophia and a Church of the Holy Apostles.[17] Greek-language inscriptions adorned mosaics made by Byzantine hands.[18] East Roman prelates served in churches built by east Roman craftsmen.[19] Native monks and clergy wore Byzantine ecclesiastical dress and prayed translated Byzantine prayers.[20] A Slavic Christian fortress, styled at least superficially after the great *Tsar'grad*, or 'city of the emperor', had appeared on the hills above the Dnieper.

GOD AND GOVERNANCE

Prior to the conversion, the Rus had been merchants, not mystics. They had trekked south seeking silver, not sacred songs. Yet at the turn of the millennium, the princes in Kiev began to invest heavily in a foreign religion. Building cathedrals, maintaining a professional clergy, sponsoring monasteries, commissioning icons, and copying parchment church books were enormously expensive. Why did a Viking dynasty, famed for trading and raiding, suddenly choose to spend its hard-won riches on the things of the spirit? Medieval and modern commentators offer various solutions. To the medieval homilist Hilarion, the first native metropolitan of Kiev, the conversion was a miracle of God, the revelation of grace and truth, the salvation of a nation by its chosen and saintly *khagan*, Vladimir. Rus was baptised 'at the eleventh hour' because it was the will of the Almighty, preordained since the Creation of the world.[21]

Modern commentators suggest more mundane reasons. Conversion conferred political legitimacy and international prestige, and granted greater access to the imperial court. It made Rus princes eligible to marry highborn brides and endowed Rus traders with greater status in

[17] Franklin and Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus*, pp. 209–17. See also G. H. Hamilton, *The Art and Architecture of Russia* (New Haven, 1983), pp. 15–107.

[18] S. C. Simmons, 'Rus Dynastic Ideology in the Frescoes of the South Chapels in St Sophia, Kiev', in N. S. M. Matheou, T. Kampianaki, and L. M. Bondioli (eds.), *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 207–25. See also V. N. Lazarev, *Drevnerusskie mozaiki i freski* (Moscow, 1973).

[19] On the history of church building in the period, see P. A. Rappaport, *Building the Churches of Kievan Russia* (New York, 1995).

[20] See E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (Moscow 1904), vol. I, pp. 670–75.

[21] '"Slovo o zakone i blagodati" Ilariona Kievskogo: Drevneishaia versiia po spisku GIM Sin. 591' (ed. K. K. Akent'ev), *Vizantinorossika*, 3 (2005). English translation in Simon Franklin, *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'* (Cambridge, 1991).

the marketplaces.[22] Prince Vladimir emerged from the holy font, moreover, at a time when rulers throughout northern and eastern Europe were doing the same. Duke Bořivoj of Bohemia and Prince Boris of Bulgaria accepted baptism in the ninth century. Mieszko, duke of Poland, and Harald Bluetooth, king of the Danes, were converted in the 960s. A decade later German missionaries baptised the leading Hungarian chieftan, Geza, and around the year 1000 missionaries from Norway converted Iceland.[23] Baptism was thus very much in vogue among Slavs, Scandinavians, and Magyars at exactly the time Vladimir was making his decision.[24]

Scholars have long recognized the political nature of these 'national' conversions. Indeed, it is by now a commonplace among early medievalists that religion and politics were so intertwined in the period that they can hardly be separated, even conceptually.[25] Everywhere one looks in the literature, the religion of a slaughtered god is synonymous with earthly might and dominion. Peter Brown likens the rise of Christianity to a new 'language of power' that developed among the Franks in Late Antiquity and slowly spread across the continent.[26] Robert Bartlett argues that the expansion of Latin bishoprics was a form of political colonization, crucial to the 'making of Europe.'[27] Patrick Geary interprets the bones of the saintly dead as key objects in the construction of medieval political power.[28] Rosamond McKitterick envisages the Carolingian church as a 'textual community' that included a literate political elite.[29] Mayke De Jong describes a late Carolingian 'penitential state' in which political crime was a sin and atonement a means of political authority.[30]

[22] J. Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus: Authorized and Unauthorized Versions', in C. B. Kendal, O. Nicholson, W. D. Phillips, Jr (eds.), *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Minneapolis, 2009), pp. 185–222. A. Poppe, 'The Political Background to the Baptism of Rus: Byzantine-Russian Relations Between 986-989', *DOP*, 30 (1976), pp. 195–244. On dynastic marriage in early Rus, see C. Raffensperger, *Ties of Kinship: Genealogy and Dynastic Marriage in Kyivan Rus'* (Cambridge, 2016).

[23] N. Berand, *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 9–18.

[24] For the description of Harald's conversion, see Ermold the Black, *In honorem Hludowici Pii*, in E. Faral (ed.), *Ermold Le Noir, Poèmme sur Louis le Pieux et Épitres au Roi Pépin* (Paris, 1964), pp. 156–91.

[25] R. McKitterick, 'Introduction', in Rob Means (ed.), *Religious Franks* (Manchester, 2016), p. 1.

[26] P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1997), p. 307.

[27] R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 1–5.

[28] P. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994).

[29] R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004).

[30] M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2009).

Dividing God and governance, or king and cult, was both unthinkable and undesirable in the early Middle Ages. The church promised resurrection and everlasting heavenly abodes, but it also served a purpose entirely of this world: to legitimate power structures and indoctrinate the masses, to make the king sovereign by making him sacred.[31] This is what made Christianity worth the enormous cost to the princes in Kiev. They had braved rapids to gain wealth, taken up the sword to win lands, and at the turn of the millennium they knelt before the cross to gain worldly power and legitimacy.

A FIRE THAT BURNS THE UNWORTHY

The Byzantines had for centuries possessed a technology of immense political value. It offered protection from invasion and inspired wonder and admiration among foreigners. Highly trained specialists, sequestered in secluded compounds, oversaw its execution and made vows never to speak of its secrets to the enemy. The technology was widely believed to be an invincible weapon and the Romans often turned to it in times of war. Those who beheld it in action marvelled at the beauty but feared they might be 'consumed like wax or grass'.[32] Contemporaries were in awe of this 'fire that burned the unworthy'. But it was not the famous 'Greek fire,' nor were the specialists who guarded it soldiers. The experts were priests and monks, and the political technology they safeguarded was the divine liturgy of the Byzantine church.

Consider once more the list of items imported into Rus around the turn of the millennium: churches, monasteries, a professional clergy, church books, icons, relics. Precisely the things required for performing the liturgy. The princes in Kiev spent vast sums to install a very real, very material imperial Roman technology throughout their realm. But what, exactly, was the purpose of this technology? What did the rites actually do that made the *khagans* willing to invest and keep investing in them? Were they strictly a means of communicating with God and the saints, via the intercessions of the clergy?[33] Or was something else, far more mundane

[31] On the making of royal saints, see G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002); M. C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2008).

[32] These phrases come from the communion prayers. For the history of these prayers in Byzantium and Rus, see R. Taft, 'The Communion, Thanksgiving and Concluding Rites,' in *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome, 2008), vol. VI, pp. 142–203; M. Zheltov, 'Molitvy vo vremia prichashcheniia sviashchennosluzhitelei v drevnerusskikh Sluzhebnikakh XIII–XIV v.', *DR* (2009), pp. 75–92.

[33] See R. McKitterick, 'Liturgy and History in the Early Middle Ages,' in K. A. Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel, and M. E. Fassler (eds.), *Medieval Cantors and their Craft* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 23–40.

and subversive, also taking place when early medieval men and women attended the divine services?

Over the course of this book, I will attempt to show that the rites of the church were in fact powerful ideological tools, forms of mass propaganda, which gave rulers control over their subjects by giving them control over the sacred past. Early medievalists are by now aware that the past, and narrative history of any sort, is a construction.[34] They are perhaps less aware that in early Rus it was liturgy largely doing the constructing. Indeed, I am persuaded that it was liturgy, more than any other medium, which created a perception of the sacred past and which instilled that perception in the minds of the people.

Standing at worship, the Rus learned of the Fall and the Exodus, the Incarnation and the Cross, the witness of the martyrs and the conversion of kings. The 'universal' history of the world from Adam and Christ to Constantine the Great was transmitted across Rus on the notes of liturgical song. As the clergy sang and prayed these songs, day after day, the imported past slowly became a native past. The sacred history of the Christian Roman Empire gradually became the sacred history of the Rus. We are therefore justified in viewing the liturgy as something more than the private internal prayer of priests and monks. I should like to suggest that the liturgical rites can also be interpreted as a public technology for creating and controlling cultural memory. The services were undoubtedly a form of religious devotion, of personal piety and public prayer, but they also served another, more worldly function. Every day of every year, for centuries without ceasing, the church rites broadcast an imaginary Christian past throughout the land of Rus. We can be quite certain that this broadcast was concerned with more than the salvation of souls.

LITURGISTS AND HISTORIANS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Such a notion of liturgy is a fairly recent discovery among early medieval historians. For much of the twentieth century, the study of liturgy and the study of history remained rigidly separated by academic disciplinary boundaries.[35] Liturgical texts were for liturgists, historical texts were for historians, and only very rarely did the twain meet, as, for example, in

34 See H. Goetz, 'Constructing the Past: Religious Dimensions and Historical Consciousness in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*', in L. B. Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 100–1300)* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 17–51.

35 See M. Rubin, 'Liturgy's Present: How Historians Are Animating a 'New' History of Liturgy', in T. Berger and B. D. Spinks (eds.), *Liturgy's Imagined Past/s: Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today* (Collegeville, 2016), pp. 19–38; E. Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, ed. M. Beaumont (Collegeville, 1998), pp. xxv–xxvii.

Ernst Kantorowicz's study on *The King's Two Bodies*.[36] The intellectual curtain between the two fields remained intact until the late 1970s, when historians such as Arnold Angenendt, Rosamond McKitterick, and Janet Nelson began to redefine the possibilities for liturgical research.[37] Previous generations had leafed through liturgical folios and found what appeared to be repetitive texts, all subjected to a peculiarly technical scholarship. But these scholars looked through them and discovered something else: a vast and unexplored resource for the study of history, politics, culture, and religion in the early Middle Ages. Liturgical manuscripts contained more than legends and miracles, these scholars realized. They contained the ideas, perceptions, and preoccupations of early medieval society.[38] They too were important historical artefacts, every bit the equal of the Bible, saints' lives, and sermons.

Evidence from the liturgy, so long ignored by medievalists, now began to appear regularly in major articles and monographs. Patrick Geary drew on liturgical materials in his writings on historical memory, as did Philippe Buc in his study of political rituals.[39] Frederick Paxton and Megan McLaughlin made use of liturgy in their research on rituals for the dead.[40] Gail Lenhoff examined liturgical manuscripts to shed light on the cult of the saints, and Yitzhak Hen mined them to learn about medieval politics and social hierarchy.[41] As the present century began, scholarly interest only continued to grow.[42] Hen proved that Frankish rulers patronized liturgy in order to disseminate political ideology.[43]

[36] E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1958).

[37] A. Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft Und Künigstaufe: Kaiser, Künige Und Päpste Als Geistliche Patrone in Der Abendländischen Missionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1984). R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (Cambridge, 1977). J. L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986).

[38] See Y. Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 8–10; R. McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 2013), p. 94.

[39] P. J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), p. 177. P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, 2001).

[40] M. McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1994). F. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1990).

[41] G. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (Columbus, 1989). Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul AD 481–751* (Leiden, 1995).

[42] Numerous studies on the liturgical context of medieval hagiography, historiography, iconography, and sacred music appeared in print, including E. Palazzo, *Liturgie Et Société Au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2000); M. E. Fassler and R. A. Baltzer, *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography* (Oxford, 2000); T. J. Heffernan and E. A. Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo, 2001); G. Althoff, J. Fried, and P. J. Geary, *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* (Washington DC, 2002).

[43] Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy*.

McKitterick demonstrated that cartularies and *Libri memoriales* were important forms of recorded history.[44] Susan Boynton emphasized that liturgical performance was the driving force behind the creation of local monastic identities.[45] Els Rose argued that liturgy was a crucial instrument in the development of Christian Apocrypha.[46] Margot Fassler showed that clerics in medieval Chartres invented a local history for their constituents by embedding it in the liturgical arts.[47] These studies were a significant step forward. For the first time, historians perceived that liturgy was not just another way of storing the past, but a means of making, propagating, and exploiting it, often for political purposes.

Recent studies have continued to unpack this crucial insight. Henry Parkes has treated church books as history books and shown that forensic attention to the manuscripts can reveal profound new things about early medieval ecclesiastical politics.[48] Lars Boje Mortensen has claimed that Latin liturgical myths were the 'sanctified beginnings' of national history writing in northern Europe.[49] An anthology with contributions from Fassler, McKitterick, and Parkes, among others, has emphasized that the writers of history and the singers of liturgy were members of the same clerical caste, an observation that they show to have important implications for the study of historiography.[50] One final example is the recent work of M. Cecelia Gaposchkin, who has argued that liturgical prayers, masses, and processions were essential in the creation and spread of medieval crusade ideology.[51]

These works, and others like them, leave little doubt that the early medieval period was indeed a 'profoundly liturgical age'.[52] Churches and monasteries dotted the medieval European landscape, and beneath their roofs the liturgy was celebrated nearly unceasingly. Kings and princes

44 McKitterick, *History and Memory*.

45 S. Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, 2006).

46 E. Rose, *Ritual Memory: The Apocryphal Acts and Liturgical Commemoration in the Early Medieval West (c. 500–1215)* (Leiden, 2009).

47 M. E. Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts* (New Haven, 2010).

48 H. Parkes, *The Making of Ottonian Liturgy* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 2–12, 172, 216.

49 L. B. Mortensen, 'Mythopoiesis in Norway, Denmark and Hungary', in Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1100–1300)* (Copenhagen, 2006), pp. 249–69.

50 Bugyis, Kraebel, and Fassler, *Medieval Cantors and their Craft*.

51 M. C. Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology* (Ithaca, 2017).

52 H. Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: An Historical Study* (London, 1999). For other recent works on liturgy in the medieval period, see Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge, 2009); J. D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597–c.1000* (London, 2014); J. F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome* (London, 2016); A. Welch, *Liturgy, Books, and Franciscan Identity in Medieval Umbria* (Leiden, 2016); H. Gittos and S. Hamilton, *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation* (Burlington, 2016).

attended the liturgy and so did peasants, warriors, and traders.[53] Liturgical sacraments baptised newborn children, consecrated marriages, comforted the sick, and buried the dead. Liturgical prayers blessed armies and crowned emperors. Liturgical feasts and fasts structured the passage of time and even sought to regulate sexual behaviour and personal nutrition. Liturgy was not an isolated and compartmentalized aspect of early medieval life. It was the omnipresent cultural context in which that life unfolded. Thus, to exclude liturgy from the study of the early Middle Ages, as earlier generations of historians had done, was profoundly misleading.

For much of the twentieth century scholars actively, if unknowingly, projected modern confessional and secularist values into an early medieval period that knew nothing of them.[54] The 'liturgical turn' that has taken place in early medieval studies therefore corrects a long-standing anachronism in the field. Imagining the early Middle Ages without liturgy is like imagining the late twentieth century without television. Liturgy was a ubiquitous feature of everyday life. It was an information technology accessible to all levels of society, and it played a part in nearly every aspect of early medieval existence, from art, architecture, and politics to medicine, diplomacy, and warfare.[55] The wealth of recent scholarship on medieval liturgy is therefore relevant not only to liturgists and historians of religion but to political, social, and economic historians as well. The divine services were present in the background during all of the battles, court intrigues, plagues, and treaty negotiations, and the history of the period is not properly told when they are excluded from the picture. It benefits all medievalists, and not only specialists in religion, when liturgy is remembered and restored to its rightful place. Otherwise scholars risk perpetuating a vision of the period that more accurately reflects current academic preoccupations than it does the realities of early medieval life.

CHURCH BOOKS AND HISTORY BOOKS

The status of liturgical manuscripts is a good example of this tendency. Until quite recently, historians ascribed little value to liturgical texts not

[53] On lay piety in eleventh-century Constantinople, see R. Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 29–132; Parenti, 'The Cathedral Rite of Constantinople', pp. 463–65.

[54] See M. de Jong, 'Rethinking Early Medieval Christianity: A View from the Netherlands', *The Bible and Politics in the Early Middle Ages,* special edition of *Early Medieval Europe* (EME, ed. de Jong), 7 (1998), pp. 261–76.

[55] On liturgy and architecture, see H. Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013); A. Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Surrey, 2008).

because they were unimportant in the early Middle Ages but because they are unimportant in the modern secular world. Indeed, to judge by the surviving manuscript evidence, early medieval church books were among the most valuable and prestigious objects of their era. No other kinds of texts were regularly gilded in gold and encrusted with precious jewels. Nor do other texts survive in anywhere near the same numbers that church books do. In early Rus, for example, over 70 per cent of the extant manuscripts are liturgical books.[56] While other Christian communities elsewhere possessed a greater diversity of literature, there can be little doubt that liturgical texts still dominated the public domain. The Byzantines did not build special buildings and ordain special members of society so that chronicles or legal codes or classical poetry could be ritually broadcast to the population. But that is precisely what was done for liturgical texts in cities and villages throughout Christendom.

The divine services were performed several times a day, in various languages, by thousands of people, in thousands of places. Church books were read and chanted for hours on end, from morning to midnight, 365 days a year. They therefore comprise one of the largest extant bodies of writing, and one of the largest collective efforts of human creativity, in all of pre-modern Eurasian history. Yet, remarkably, when one looks through academic monographs on the early Middle Ages, and even works devoted to religion, this massive manuscript resource is very often absent. It is as if the services, as well as the vast number of surviving manuscripts that testify to their importance, never existed.

The irony is that early medieval liturgy has probably been excluded from mainstream historical studies precisely because of its enormity, ubiquity, and complexity. Each liturgical service involved a multitude of church books and each church book has a historical trajectory spanning hundreds of years. Even within a single tradition and a single city, be it Rome or Constantinople or Mainz or Kiev, the extant corpus of texts is gigantic and bewildering, and it is not unheard of for professional liturgists to devote the bulk of their careers to tracing the origins and development of only one church book or one service. The criticism historians sometimes level at traditional liturgiology is therefore rather harsh, since the field's esotericism and methodological narrowness are in many ways

[56] N. V. Volkov, *Statisticheskie svedeniia o sokhranivshikhsia drevnerusskikh knigakh XI–XIV vekov i ikh ukazatel'* (St Petersburg, 1897), pp. 38, 95. One scholar has put the figure as high as 90 per cent. See I. V. Pozdeeva, 'Liturgicheskii tekst kak istoricheskii istochnik', *Voprosy istorii*, 6 (2000), p. 112. For more on these figures, and on the distinction between the survival of books and the production of books, see S. Franklin, *Writing, Society, and Culture in Early Rus c. 950-1300* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 23–26.

a response to the difficulty of the materials.[57] Liturgists reconstruct the history of texts that were composed and redacted by countless anonymous authors and copyists, at multiple sites, over the course of several centuries. Their task is no less complicated, and no more esoteric, than the source criticism devoted to the epics of Homer or the books of the Old and New Testaments. Like these more familiar disciplines, liturgiology does not yield its secrets to the uninitiated.

Liturgical manuscripts were texts written by specialists for specialists, often in special liturgical languages, and they contain numerous notes, abbreviations, and instructions that are easily lost on the modern student. A high degree of specialization is required just to understand which church books are used for which services during which seasons and in what order. Add to this liturgy's labyrinthine ritual choreography, with its multiple moving parts and voices, chanted and sung from several different church books simultaneously, and it becomes clear why historians have shied away from these challenging source materials. To the untrained modern observer, early medieval liturgy is alien and incomprehensible. It does not fit within established academic disciplinary boundaries. It does not reflect the intellectual methods or political values of secular historiography, and it does not bear reading like a traditional linear text. For these reasons, early medievalists have often struggled to make sense of liturgical evidence. They do not always grasp its message. They cannot hear its story as it needs to be heard. This proves to be an important, if overlooked, development in the study of early medieval history. For though liturgy remains *terra incognita* to many historians today, it was extremely familiar to their early medieval predecessors.

CHRONICLERS IN THE CLOISTER

Historiography in the early Middle Ages was predominantly an ecclesiastical practice. Throughout the Christian *oikouméne*, in places as distant as Novgorod and Northumbria, it was clerics who wrote and rewrote, copied and recopied, the political and sacred histories of their respective communities. Yet this was not their primary occupation. The writers of history were first and foremost bishops, priests, and monks: ordained members of a sacerdotal caste dedicated to the celebration of the divine services. From dawn to dusk, these clergymen lived in a liturgical world, surrounded by liturgical books. The sacred texts were constantly in their hands and before their eyes: as they said morning prayers and sang matins, as they prepared and consecrated the bread and wine, as they chanted

57 For an example of such criticism, see Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy*, pp. 8–10.

psalms at hours, performed vespers at sunset, and recited final prayers before sleep.

The manuscript evidence, quite literally, bears the marks of this intensive use. Remnants of candle wax can be seen on Gospel lectionaries and Epistle books. Oil and water stains are visible on texts used to perform the sacraments. Thumb marks from generations of monks appear on tattered pages of the Psalter. These 'defects' are important physical reminders that church books were not texts that early medieval history writers sat about and read like a modern novel or journal article. Clerics solemnly carried these texts in ritual processions. They prayed over them while anointing the sick and baptising the young. Scholarship on medieval liturgy tends to concentrate on texts qua texts, and understandably so, since they are the empirical artefacts that physically survive from the period. But one should not forget that these manuscripts principally belonged to the ritual realm. A hymn in incensed air, a psalm on the cantor's lips, monks chanting at vigil. These are the things that should first come to mind when one thinks of liturgy, rather than manuscripts in a modern archive.

Church books were performed texts, and it was the era's history writers doing the performing. Clerics spent hours and hours reading, praying, singing, chanting, and hearing the divine services, every day of their lives. In so doing, they came deeply to internalize the contents of these books. They could recite them from memory with only the slightest mnemonic cue.[58] This, ultimately, is why liturgy is so important to the study of early medieval historiography: because inside those church books there were sacred stories about the sacred past. With every prayer and every hymn, the clergy ritually retold the sacred histories of other, more ancient communities. They chanted scriptures about the Passover. They commemorated the deeds of the apostles. They sang hymns for Roman emperors. When the services ended, and the clerics returned to their cells or walked to the scriptorium, these sacred stories stayed with them. It is the premise of this book, as it has been for several other very recent studies, that the 'universal' history these clerics sang at church naturally, and significantly, affected the local history they wrote down on parchment.

IMAGINARY PASTS, IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

Historians have long known that the accounts found in early medieval history books are far from the unvarnished recounting of events as they

[58] Parkes, *Ottonian Liturgy*, p. 12. See also P. Riché, 'Le Psautier livre de lecture élémentaire d'après les vies des saints mérovingiens', *Études mérovingiennes, Actes des Journées de Poitiers*, l–3 (1953), pp. 253–56.

actually occurred. They are the product of individuals or groups with their own biases, agendas, and viewpoints. Study of these manuscripts therefore inevitably gives rise to questions of methodology. What, exactly, can be known from the surviving manuscripts and how can scholars come to know it? Solutions to this question are of course extremely numerous and diverse.[59] Broadly speaking, however, one can discern a general shift in thinking among early medievalists over the past few decades. A postmodern sensibility, in the guise of the narrative turn and cultural memory studies, has appeared in early medieval studies as well, leading many scholars to adopt a more sceptical attitude towards their primary sources. If earlier generations tended to view historiographical manuscripts as a reservoir of facts, waiting to be decoded, historians today are more sensitive to the subjective and composed nature of these materials. They prefer to speak of 'perceptions' and 'representations' of the past, of its 'resources' and 'uses'.[60] They emphasize that canonical written versions of the past are not a given, but rather the result of a careful process of selection, omission, and elaboration.[61] Thus, rather than scouring manuscripts for supposedly neutral facts, many historians have now turned to unravelling how forms of the written past were 'made'; how they were constructed and understood by authors in their original, native context.

The results of this approach have sometimes been quite stunning. For what scholars have learned when they unravel these constructions is that the surviving manuscripts often reveal less about the period they purportedly describe and more about the period in which they were created. They have discovered that early medieval historiography was constantly written and rewritten, negotiated and renegotiated, not to reflect events as they actually happened, but to serve the ideological needs of the moment.[62] Examples abound of early medieval writers shaping the past to fit the present. Ninth-century Carolingian scribes transformed Jewish, Roman, and early Christian history into an apology for Frankish kingship.[63] Eleventh-century Bavarian chroniclers constructed mythic

[59] On the history of early medieval historiography, see M. Innes, 'Introduction: Using the Past, Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future', in Innes (ed.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 2–4; Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 2–19.

[60] Innes, *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*. McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*. C. Gantner, R. McKitterick, and S. Meeder, *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015).

[61] R. McKitterick and M. de Jong, 'Conclusion', in Gantner et al., *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, p. 280.

[62] Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity*, pp. 338–39.

[63] McKitterick, *History and Memory,* pp. 86, 130.

pasts that promoted the contemporary aims of their monasteries.[64] Twelfth-century Korean writers rewrote their past to challenge the effects of Chinese conquest.[65] Fourteenth-century Bulgarian clerics refashioned Byzantine historical writings into an imperial lineage for their reigning tsar.[66]

Throughout the early Middle Ages, and across the European landmass, clerical writers took up their pens and made a political weapon of the past. They provided kings with sacred origins. They endowed monastic founders with saintliness. They made martyrs out of princes slain in battle. These tales may not have been factually accurate, but that was beside the point. They were politically useful not because they told the truth about the past. They were useful because they created versions of the past that bound people together in imagined communities. By sharing stories about a common past, as Jan and Aleida Assmann have shown, human beings come to share a common political identity.[67] They feel themselves part of a larger social group. Medieval clerical history writers were not only servants of the church, therefore, but also servants of the state. They constructed perceptions of the past, and these perceptions helped turn heterogeneous, disparate populations into cohesive political communities.

THE EXPLOITATION OF SACRED NARRATIVE

History books were only one part of this process, however, and perhaps a secondary part. Once again, it is possible that scholars have exaggerated the role of historiography and neglected that of the liturgy. They have overwhelmingly focused on how the past was constructed in history books and generally ignored how it was constructed in church books. As a result, the critical literature gives the impression, intentionally or not, that the early medieval past was principally a textual invention and that it was the reading and writing of historiographical manuscripts that was chiefly responsible for transmitting the past and forming group identity. While this may be true of later periods, particularly after the invention of the printing press, it was not true of many societies in early medieval Europe, and particularly those on the periphery such as Rus.

64 Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, pp. 115–33.

65 R. E. Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918–1170* (Leiden, 2010).

66 E. Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 2–12.

67 A. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge, 2011). J. Assmann, 'Remembering in Order to Belong', in *Religion and Cultural Memory* (Palo Alto, 2006).

One of the propositions I made earlier in this chapter is that history in the early Middle Ages was primarily disseminated through the liturgy. I suggested that the vast majority of people learned about the past in what they heard and saw and reenacted at the divine services, not in what they read from books.[68] If this is indeed the case, then the liturgical rites should be understood as valuable instruments of political power and social control. For whoever controlled the liturgy largely controlled the construction and dissemination of the sacred past, and whoever controlled the sacred past ultimately had the capacity to shape the political power structure. They possessed a technology that could make and propagate versions of history that justified the status quo and glorified the ruling elite.

The key to this entire enterprise was narrative, the exploitation of sacred narrative. The past, after all, is a story, and it was liturgy that did the storytelling. Week after week, the people went to church and encountered a vast web of sacred narrative paradigms. While worshipping at liturgy, medieval Christians internalized the historical models for sin and redemption, and law and grace, but they also internalized the models of the holy king, the saintly soldier, and the divinely protected empire. The denizens of Constantinople sang hymns for right-believing emperors and empresses, such as Saints Justinian and Theodora, and for military saints, such as Saint George the Dragon Slayer.[69] They ritually commemorated the emperor Heraclius' victory over the Persians in 627 and his recovery of the 'true cross'.[70] Christians in twelfth-century Rus celebrated the feast of the Protection of the Theotokos, a service recounting how the Virgin's veil miraculously saved Constantinople from barbarian invasion.[71] In later generations, during Great Lent and at the Royal Hours of Nativity and Theophany, the Rus stood in darkened churches and chanted the rather patriotic refrain: 'God is with us: understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves. For God is with us!'[72]

As these few examples illustrate, the sacred past medieval Christians learned at church was not principally about the past at all. It was an ideational framework, a set of interconnected narratives, which helped to make and legitimize the ruling order. In my estimation, this was one

[68] Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres*, xii.

[69] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, pp. 101–103, 261. For more on the cult of military saints in the Christian East, see M. White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2013).

[70] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, pp. 29–31.

[71] A. Aleksandrov, 'Ob ustanovlenii prazdniki Pokrova Presviatoi Bogoroditsy v Russkoi Tserkvi', *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, 10–11 (1983).

[72] *Chasoslov"*, Moskovskaia Patriarkhiia (Moscow, 1980). See also A. A. Tkachenko and M. Zheltov, 'Bibleiskie pesni', in *PE* (Moscow, 2009), vol. V, pp. 62–71.

of the main reasons that monarchs throughout Christendom paid handsomely for cathedrals, a professional clergy, and church books. These were the prerequisites for celebrating the liturgy, and liturgy had the power to sacralize their regimes and sanctify their political authority. It had the ability to turn the history of their dynasties into the sacred history of the saints.

AN EAST ROMAN LITURGICAL COLONY

The chapters that follow examine how this process unfolded in early Rus. As we have already seen, a group of Vikings made their way down the waterways of the East European plain and eventually seized power in Kiev. There they consolidated their rule over the heterogeneous native population and strengthened their commercial ties to the imperial capital. Near the turn of the millennium, the group's rulers adopted the faith of their wealthier and more powerful southern trading partners. East Roman religious rites were installed in Kiev, and the East Slavs began to worship in the manner of the Byzantines. The religious Romanization of the land of Rus had officially begun.

This was hardly the instant and glorious transformation described in later narrative accounts, however.[73] The pagans of Rus did not emerge from the baptismal waters citing scripture and writing lives of the saints. In fact, for over half a century after the official conversion, they did not cite or write much of anything at all. 'The years from 988 to the 1040s were the Dark Ages of early Christian Rus', Simon Franklin explains. 'Dark because relatively little is known about them; dark because our impressions are formed by suspect subsequent portrayals of them; dark also because, in all probability, they genuinely were culturally unproductive.'[74] Tenth-century Kievans converted under Vladimir but remained silent. Apart from a handful of fragmentary inscriptions, no specimens of native Rus writing survive from the first five decades of the Christian era. There are no extant eyewitness accounts of the conversion, nor are there any surviving church books, monastic charters, legal codes, or chronicles. The first generation of Christians were baptised but apparently unlettered. They went to church, heard the Word of God, and listened to the sacred stories, but they failed to leave behind any words or stories of their own.

[73] See J. Shepard, 'Rus'', in N. Berand (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 369–416.

[74] S. Franklin, 'Borrowed Time: Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Rus'', in Paul Magdalino (ed.), *Perceptions of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), pp. 157–58.

The silence was finally broken during the reign of Vladimir's son, Iaroslav the Wise, who ascended the throne in 1036 and ruled as grand prince until his death in 1054.[75] Suddenly, wherever one looks in Kiev, there is evidence of a flourishing, well-funded, and highly literate Christian culture. Clergymen delivered learned sermons. Monks founded large monastic communities. Scribes copied church books and drafted legal codes, and iconographers painted vibrant frescoes. At the magnificent new cathedral of Saint Sophia, the crown jewel of Iaroslav's ambitious building programme, clerics possibly assembled the first redaction of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. After half a century of obscurity, the Christians in Kiev had at last left their mark. A full-scale East Roman liturgical colony was flourishing in the land of Rus.

The decades-long delay between the installation of liturgy and the writing of history allowed for an important change to take place within Kievan society. During that time, several generations of Rus clerics had grown up as Christians, stood at liturgy, and listened to the sacred stories. The ritual paradigms had therefore had ample time to penetrate their imaginations. The liturgical construction of the past and the liturgical construction of political power were by then firmly inscribed upon the 'tablet of their hearts'.[76] After five decades of Slavonic-language worship, the Byzantine rite was no longer an alien and unfamiliar foreign import. Most of the clerics had probably been baptised as infants and had attended the sacred rites since childhood. Slavonic was their native tongue, Christianity their native religion, and liturgy their native ritual environment.

Lifelong contact with the liturgy had provided these 'servants of God' with a rigorous education in universal history. They were well schooled in the sacred past of the Jews, the early Christians, and the Romans. They knew of the Old Covenant and the New, and of the long line of prophets, apostles, and kings, chosen by God to fulfil his plan for the salvation of the world. As the years passed, and this liturgical past became ever more familiar, the clerics in Kiev very probably began to imagine a place for their own people within this divine economy.

When these churchmen envisaged the Rus appearing in sacred history, it is doubtful they thought of words on a chronicle page. Given their

[75] On the title of 'grand prince', see A. Poppe, 'Words That Serve the Authority: On the Title of "Grand Prince" in Kievan Rus', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 60 (1989), pp. 159–84.

[76] Proverbs 7:3.

profession, and their constant immersion in the liturgical rites, it is more likely that their thoughts first turned to icons, church books, and feast days. For in their experience of the world, the liturgy was primary and historiography secondary. The liturgical past was broadcast daily, even hourly, throughout the land, while the historiographical past remained enclosed in a handful of books, unknown and inaccessible to all but the literate few. Thus, to enter into the sacred past, from the perspective of eleventh-century clerics, meant above all to enter into the liturgical past. In their minds, the place of Rus in the history of salvation was principally determined by its place in the liturgical calendar. The celebration of Roman saints in Kiev made the Rus perceive themselves as part of a wider Christendom and very probably created an association with a more universal past. Yet these feasts also demonstrated to the native clerics precisely what they lacked. As long as the Rus remained absent from the liturgical calendar, and so long as they celebrated only the feasts of foreign saints, they would continue to be excluded from 'universal' sacred history.

The time had therefore come for the Rus to have saints and services of their own. Yet neither the clerics, nor their rulers, had the authority to canonize local saints. The church in Rus was headed by a metropolitan based in Kiev, who was appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. Thus, any important ecclesiastical decisions, such as who should be recognized as a saint, were presumably subject to the approval of the hierarchs in New Rome. The princes and prelates of Rus were not at liberty to create new liturgical feasts for native saints, just as they saw fit. Yet neither was there any standard process for official canonization.[77] Even in the Latin West, it was not until the twelfth century that a formal protocol for canonizing new saints was established, and there is little evidence to suggest such formalities ever existed in the medieval Orthodox East.[78]

So how did a newly baptised land enter into the liturgical past? How did native heroes take their place next to the prophets, apostles, and martyrs of sacred history? How did local rulers come to appear alongside

[77] F. Butler, *Enlightener of Rus': The Image of Vladimir Sviatoslavovich across the Centuries (Bloomington, 2002)*, pp. 71–81. R. Macrides, 'Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period', in S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (Crestwood, 1981), pp. 67–87. J. Fennell, 'When Was Olga Canonized?' in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs: Slavic Culture in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 77–82. N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir i kreshchenie Rusi. Drevneishie pis'mennye istochniki* (St Petersburg, 2008), pp. 10–11.

[78] E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatykh v russkoi tservkvi* (Moscow, 1903), pp. 286–87. See also A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 11–59.

Roman emperors in the church books and on icon screens? The answers to these questions can be found, I believe, in the surviving redactions of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. The study therefore continues in the next chapter with an extensive review of this remarkable, controversial, and notoriously difficult manuscript.

Chapter 2

THE *RUS PRIMARY CHRONICLE*

The historical manuscript at the centre of this study has been called by many names. At various times and in various places, it has been known as the *Chronicle of Nestor* (*Летопись Нестора*), the *Primary Chronicle* (*Начальная летопись*), the *Russian Primary Chronicle* (*Начальная русская летопись*), the *Kievan Primary Chronicle* (*Начальная киевская летопись)*, and the *Tale of Bygone Years* (*Повесть временных лет*). To avoid connotations of nationalism, while still retaining the traditional terminology, some anglophone scholars have also started to refer to the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. I have continued that practice in the present study.

The uncertainty surrounding the title is largely a result of the chronicle's long and complex textual history. What should one call a manuscript that, strictly speaking, does not exist? There is not a library or archive anywhere in the world that possesses an early medieval manuscript bearing any of the names above. What does exist, rather, is a vast collection of much later codices, dating from the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, all of which begin with a nearly identical story: 'a tale of seasons and years, of whence came the land of Rus and who first began to rule in it'.[1]

The tale begins with Noah dividing the earth among his sons after the biblical flood. There follows a lengthy ethnic history, in which the Rus and Slavs are claimed to have descended from the line of Japheth, Noah's third son. With a proper biblical lineage thus established, the narrative gradually begins to narrow its focus: first to various Slavic tribes, then to the Poliane of the Kiev region, and finally to the family who came to rule them, the Rurikids. This change from ethnic to dynastic history is

[1] *The Povest' vremennykh let: An Interlinear Collation and Paradosis*, comp. and ed. D. Ostrowski; associate ed. D. J. Birnbaum, senior consultant H. G. Lunt, Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, vol. X, 3 parts (Cambridge, 2003), 0, 1–4. Henceforth cited as *PVL*. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are mine.

accompanied by a change in form. Beginning in the mid-ninth century, the chronicle shifts from continuous narrative to annals, a format in which events are recorded chronologically, year by year. The annals portray the founding events of the medieval Kievan state: the invitation to Rurik and his kin to rule over the scattered Slavic tribes in and around Novgorod; their advance southwards 'along the way of the Varangians to the Greeks' and the establishment of the Rus dynasty in Kiev; the continued expansion of the state in the reign of the warrior-prince, Sviatoslav; the war of succession following his death and the enthronement of Vladimir as grand prince.

If the first hundred years of annals depict the rise of Rus, the second hundred depict the central episodes of its Christianization. There are reports on the baptism of Olga in Constantinople, the conversion under Vladimir, and the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb. The story continues with the flowering of Christian culture in the reign of Iaroslav, the founding of the Monastery of the Caves by the hermit Antonii, and its growth under the saintly abbot Feodosii. The final half-century of the chronicle describes a period of turmoil and division. The Kievan polity is repeatedly beset by rivalries within the princely family and by threats of invasion from without. Here the entries assume an increasingly moralistic tone, as the chronicle appeals to the warring branches of the dynasty to unite and forestall the ruin of Rus. The chronicle is traditionally thought to terminate *in medias res* in the year 1110 with a report about a pillar of fire seen over the Caves Monastery, although scholars have also suggested a variety of slightly later dates.[2]

There are five main manuscript witnesses of this foundational account. The oldest of these is the Laurentian Codex (RNB, F.IV.2), which was compiled for Prince Dmitrii Konstantinovich of Suzdal in 1377.[3] It is followed by the Hypatian Codex (BAN, 16.4.4), a collection of chronicle entries copied around 1425, possibly in Pskov. Next, there is the Radziwiłł Codex (BAN, 34.5.30), the earliest extant illustrated chronicle, renowned for its more than 600 colourful miniatures and datable to the 1490s.[4] A fourth primary witness, the Academy Codex (RGB, MDA 5/

[2] Alternative dates can be found in V. M. Istrin, 'Zamechaniia o nachale russkogo letopisaniia: Po povodu issledovanii A. A. Shakhmatov v oblasti drevne-russkoi letopisi', *IORIaS*, 27 (1924), pp. 220–30; V. N. Rusinov, 'Letopisnye stat'i 1051–1117 gg. v sviazi s problemoi avtorstva i redaktsii "Povesti vremennykh let"', *Vestnik Nizhegordskogo universiteta im. N. I. Lobachevskogo. Ser. Istoriia* (2003), pp. 111–47; M. Kh. Aleshkovskii, *'Povest' vremennykh let': Iz istorii sozdaniia i redaktsionnoi pererabotki*, ed. F. B. Uspenskii (Moscow, 2015).

[3] Ia. S. Lur'e, *Obshcherusskie letopisi XIV–XV vv.* (Leningrad, 1976), pp. 17–36.

[4] O. P. Likhacheva, 'Letopis' Ipat'evskaia', in *SKK*, vol. I: *X–pervaia polovina XIV v.* (Leningrad, 1987), pp. 235–41. B. M. Kloss, 'Predislovie k izdaniiu 1997 g.', in *PSRL* (St Petersburg, 1997), vol. I, p. I.

182), also dates to the late fifteenth century, when it was probably made for the princes of Rostov.[5] Finally, we have the Khlebnikov Codex (RNB, F.IV.230), a mid-sixteenth-century text that was discovered in the private collection of a merchant by the writer and historian, Nikolai Karamzin.[6]

Perhaps the best way to think of these codices is to imagine a matryoshka, or Russian nesting doll.[7] These painted wooden figures are famous for their hidden intricacies. The egg-shaped doll separates in half, top from bottom, revealing a smaller figure of the same sort inside. The second doll proves to contain a still smaller figure, which in turn contains a still smaller figure, and so on. The codices of medieval Rus are constituted similarly. Each manuscript is a compilation of previous compilations. The extant text comprises earlier texts, which themselves comprise still earlier texts, and on down the line. The history of these manuscripts is therefore fantastically complicated and very often confounding.

Consider the Laurentian Codex, a book comprising 173 parchment leaves, written in vermillion and black ink. Its first forty pages are the work of an unknown monk, who wrote in the most ancient Cyrllic uncial letters using a broad single column. The remaining 130 folios were executed in two columns of 'ancient Rus semi-uncial script', mostly by the monk Lavrentii, whose name appears in the concluding colophon.[8] He began copying the text on 14 January 1377, possibly at the Monastery of the Annunciation near Nizhnii Novgorod, and finished his labour three months later on 20 March.

Now let us watch as the matryoshka is unpacked. Scholars generally agree that Lavrentii copied his manuscript from a compilation made in Tver in 1305 for Prince Vladimir Iaroslavich. This 1305 compilation was itself a continuation of a series of manuscripts produced for the princes of Rostov between 1229 and 1281. The scribes in Rostov were drawing, in turn, on a series of compilations made in Vladimir from 1177 to 1212 for Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii and his successors. Bogoliubskii's bookmen, for their part, composed these copies using late twelfth-century chronicle records from the southern Rus city of Pereslavl'-South. These records were based on a chronicle compilation made at least fifty years earlier in the monasteries of nearby Kiev. It is this set of chronicle entries, dating to

[5] Kloss, 'Predislovie k izdaniiu 1997 g.', pp. J–L.

[6] O. Pritsak, *The Old Rus' Kievan and Galician-Volynian Chronicles: The Ostroz'skyj (Xlebnikov) and Četvertins'kyj (Pogodin) Codices* (Cambridge, 1990).

[7] I borrow the metaphor from A. Tolochko, *Ocherki nachal'noi Rusi* (Kiev, 2015), p. 21.

[8] Ia. S. Lur'e, 'Letopis' Lavrent'evskaia', in *SKK*, vol. I: *X–pervaia polovina XIV v.* (Leningrad, 1987), pp. 241–45.

the second decade of the twelfth century, which we refer to today as the *Rus Primary Chronicle*.[9]

A quarter of a millennium, five cities, at least nine generations of various princely lines, and no fewer than ten different chronicle compilations. It is enough to disorient even the most devoted of specialists, and yet I have only described, in the broadest of terms, that period of the chronicle's formation on which scholars more or less agree. Our matryoshka has still not reached the end, the innermost core. In fact, for many students of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, it has only just started to reveal the layers hidden within. For it is not the surviving manuscripts that have interested most scholars over the past 250 years, but rather the question of what came before them.

What did the original Rus historiographical documents look like? Who composed them and when? Were chronicle compilations made in Kiev before the twelfth century and, if so, how many? What source materials did the first Kievan scribes have at their disposal and how did they use them? These are the questions that have preoccupied scholars since the chronicles of Rus began to be studied critically during the Enlightenment. In the time since, all manner of bewildering and contradictory theories have been put forward. Thousands upon thousands of pages have been written on hypothetical texts and their hypothetical authors. Nearly as many pages have been written in reaction and opposition to such speculations. It is all too easy to be drawn into this scholarly 'hall of mirrors' and completely lose one's way.[10]

A complete survey of the enormous secondary literature is simply not possible.[11] In what follows, I shall therefore focus on the careers of two main figures, one very often forgotten, the other a singular giant of the field. It is a strategy that will require my review of the remaining literature to be selective in the extreme. Yet this too shall have its benefits, since my aim is to solve but a single problem. Namely, why were two extraordinarily gifted philologists, and generations of their successors, never able to identify the liturgical sources of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*?

My investigation begins in a perhaps unlikely place. I shall for the moment set aside the journals of modern Moscow and Kiev, and the thick tomes of pre-Revolutionary St Petersburg and travel back to the mid-

9 On the history of the Laurentian Codex, see M. D. Priselkov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–XV vv*. (Leningrad, 1940), pp. 60–113.

10 A. Tolochko, 'Christian Chronology, Universal History, and the Origin of Chronicle Writing in Rus'', in I. H. Garipzanov (ed.), *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity on a European Periphery* (Turnhout, 2011), p. 207.

11 On the history of chronicle studies in Russia, see V. G. Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly Issledovaniia russkikh letopisei: XIX–XX vv*. (St Petersburg, 2011).

eighteenth century, to a time when modern philological practices were still virtually unknown among Russia's intellectual and academic elite. Here, in the salons of the imperial capital, one encounters a confident and talented foreigner, a noted scholar and polymath, determined to leave his mark on the study of ancient letters, both in Russia and far beyond.

THE APOSTLE OF GERMAN PHILOLOGY

On 22 November 1761, August Ludwig von Schlözer arrived in St Petersburg after a hazardous three-month journey by sea. The 26-year-old linguist had travelled from his native Germany at the invitation of Gerhard Friedrich Müller, the ethnographer, historian, and co-founder of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who had emigrated to the northern capital three decades earlier. One evening after tea the senior scholar conducted his new colleague upstairs to his office, where he pointed to vast stacks of manuscripts, all awaiting academic study, which he had collected during his famous travels across Siberia and European Russia. 'Here there is enough work to occupy you, and me, and dozens of others for a whole lifetime', he told his compatriot.[12]

Few were as qualified for this kind of philological labour as Schlözer. A descendant of three generations of Protestant clergymen, the young polyglot had mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew while still a schoolboy. After reading theology in Wittenburg, he had studied geography and near eastern languages at the University of Göttingen, where he was trained in the methods of biblical criticism pioneered by his mentor, the Orientalist Johann David Michaelis. Such methods were utterly unknown in Catherine's Russia. 'In Göttingen we were accustomed to a painstaking, thorough method of work', Schlözer later wrote in his autobiography. 'How sharply this contrasted with the careless method, more careless than even the superficial French method, with which they treated all literary subjects in St Petersburg.'[13]

Schlözer never intended to devote himself to the study of 'old Russian history', as the medieval period was called at that time. He originally envisaged his sojourn in Russia as merely the first leg of a much greater overland voyage to inner Asia, where he planned to continue his research on the languages and literatures of the Orient. These plans were eventually abandoned, however, as Schlözer became increasingly engrossed in the study of modern Russian and Old Church Slavonic. He found the

[12] A. L. Schlözer, *Obshchestvennaia i chastnaia zhizn' Avgusta Liudviga Shletsera, im samim opisannaia* (St Petersburg, 1875), p. 44.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 63.

latter language particularly fascinating, going so far as to describe it as the best language for translating Homer. The more he studied the ancient tongue, moreover, the more he found himself drawn to the earliest specimens of Rus historiography. 'My heart was inclined above all towards Russian chronicles,' he explained. Müller employed him to work on modern topics, such as geography and statistics, yet the ambitious young researcher persisted in asking for access to the chronicle manuscripts. 'All around me I saw an abundant harvest, untouched by the sickle,' Schlözer recalled years later. 'And no one but me could harvest it so soon . . . To be the first publisher and commentator of the chronicles of the most populous, most powerful, and most formidable country in Europe. Was it truly possible to consider that a trifling matter?'[14]

Schlözer was alarmed at the state of Russian chronicle studies. No one in the capital seemed to be aware of the extensive philological research required to understand these materials properly. Even Schlözer's host, the highly esteemed Müller, was in the habit of treating the sources like a collection of ready-made facts, available to scholars without any consideration of their textual history. The newcomer instantly perceived the limitations of such an approach, and he resolved to study medieval chronicles in the same fashion that his professors in Göttingen were studying the songs of Homer and the epistles of St Paul.[15]

The German did not have to wait long to enjoy the first fruits of this endeavour. One evening, shortly after acquiring a small sample of printed excerpts, he discovered that the chronicle's undated opening section, which recounts the origins of the world from the biblical flood, was of Byzantine provenance.[16] Schlözer published these findings three years later in the first-ever comparative study of East Slavic and East Roman historiography, 'Periculum antiquitatis russicae, graecis collustratae luminibus'.[17] This article was followed, four years later, by a much larger effort, *Probe russischer Annalen*, in which he outlined an ambitious plan for the analysis and publication of Slavonic-language annals.

It was a plan that would prove to be the task of a lifetime, just as his senior colleague had once suggested. In 1767, Schlözer returned to Germany to take up a professorship at his alma mater. For the next thirty years, while living just a short walk from the Göttingen library, he continued his investigations into the origins of East Slavic history writing. Finally, in the early years of the nineteenth century, he published a work

[14] *Ibid*., pp. 46–47. [15] A. L. Schlözer, *Probe russischer Annalen* (Göttingen, 1768), p. 179.
[16] Schlözer, *Obshchestvennaia i chastnaia zhizn'*, p. 61.
[17] N. L. Rubinshtein, *Russkaia istoriografiia* (Moscow, 1941), pp. 150–66.

that many of his contemporaries lauded as the first modern critical edition of a medieval European chronicle. This was his magnum opus, *Несторъ: Russische Annalen in ihrer Slavonischen Grund-Sprache verglichen, übersetzt und erklärt von August Ludwig Schlözer.*[18]

The title of the five-volume study was revealing. It highlighted both the critical nature of the study and the author's belief that a single monk named Nestor was responsible for writing the full text of the first Kievan chronicle. Such a notion was widespread in Russia at the time, so much so that the work was typically referred to as the *Chronicle of Nestor*. Over the course of nearly four decades, Schlözer managed to examine twenty-one redactions of 'Nestor', as he was in the habit of calling the text.[19] During that time, he became increasingly convinced that there was a major problem with the surviving manuscripts. The earliest folios he had before him were from the Hypatian and Radziwiłł codices, which dated from the fifteenth century, not the eleventh. He was therefore reading not the original, pristine work of Nestor, but rather versions that had been deformed and distorted by nearly four centuries of transmission.

The linguist was utterly certain where to assign the blame. The guilty parties were the 'wretched' and 'simple-minded' clerics who had copied these texts.[20] Like his teacher Michaelis, Schlözer found all manner of fault with these 'ignorant monks of the middle ages'.[21] It was they who had introduced 'stupid mistakes' and 'fabrications, nonsense, miracles and fairytales' into the manuscripts.[22] Schlözer considered it his duty as an editor to excise such errors and accretions. He believed that by painstakingly comparing 'all the redactions . . . letter by letter, word by word', he could overcome centuries of monastic interference and recover the original composition.[23] With the publication of *Nestor* in 1802, Schlözer was confident he had accomplished exactly that. 'If there is anything important in this book,' he wrote in the introduction to the work, 'it is of course the reconstruction of Nestor's original words'.[24]

Critics hailed the reconstructed text as a major breakthrough. 'Before Shlözer, a critical approach to the chronicles was completely absent', one later reviewer explained. 'Chronicles were read, copied, a few places were arbitrarily corrected, and in this manner the collected materials were mechanistically compiled into thick volumes.'[25] In contrast, as one contemporary reviewer noted, Schlözer had 'employed that very method

[18] A. L. Schlözer, *Nestor": Russische Annalen in ihrer Slavonischen Grund-Sprache verglichen, übersetzt und erklärt von August Ludwig Schlözer*, vols. I–V (Göttingen, 1802–1809).
[19] *Ibid.*, pp. I–VII. [20] *Ibid.*, p. 397. Schlözer, *Obshchestvennaia i chastnaia zhizn'*, p. 61.
[21] J. D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Herbert Marsh (London, 1801), p. 516.
[22] Schlözer, *Obshchestvennaia i chastnaia zhizn'*, p. 61. [23] Schlözer, *Nestor"*, p. VIII.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 7. [25] Cited in Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly isslodovaniia*, p. 61.

practised in the previous eighteenth century when publishing Greek and Latin classical texts and the books of Holy Scripture'. By analysing the text of a chronicle as if it were a page from the Bible, he had 'therefore accorded the *Chronicle of Nestor* a kind of respect never before shown to any other ancient chronicle'.[26] The suggestion here is that Schlözer was the first scholar to study medieval chronicles like a professional linguist and philologist. This was true not only for Russia, but indeed for all of Europe. It would be another sixty years before Gaston Paris adopted a similar approach in his studies of western medieval texts. Schlözer's work was thus truly pioneering. He was the first to search for earlier sources, the first to employ a comparative linguistic methodology, and the first to reconstruct a hypothetical urtext. His career anticipated the course of chronicle studies, in both Russia and the West, for centuries to come.

Yet for all of his advances, Schlözer was still very much a product of his age. Nowhere is this more apparent than in his attitude towards 'Nestor the Chronicler'. Throughout his writings, Schlözer depicts this figure as the lone fountainhead of all early Rus historiography: 'Nestor is the first, most ancient, and only native source of the most ancient history until 1054.'[27] There is no place in Schlözer's scheme for previous compilations or earlier texts and authors. There is only Nestor: the ideal, abstract chronicler, before whom there was no native chronicle writing and after whom came only distortions and corruptions.[28] Even this rather individualistic interpretation was not of Schlözer's own devising, however. Once again the linguist was simply applying the hermeneutic principles he had studied in Germany to the chronicle manuscripts he had found in Russia. From his mentor Michaelis, he had learned that Moses alone was responsible for writing nearly all of the Pentateuch and the Book of Job. Another of his colleagues, the celebrated classicist Christian Heyne, had long taught that Homer was the sole author of the *Iliad* and the *Odysessy*.[29] Under the influence of such ideas, and in keeping with the nationalist spirit of the age, Schlözer imagined a similar figure at the dawn of 'Russian' historiography. Homer had sung of the origins of classical Greece, Moses had revealed the origins of biblical Israel, and in due time Nestor had recorded the origins of imperial Russia.

Such a notion of authorship, passed down from teacher to student, was one of the great errors of the Göttingen school of history. Yet it would be corrected just before the close of the century by one of the school's own

[26] Anonymous, *Moskovskie uchenye vedomosti* (Moscow, 1805), pp. 3–4.
[27] Schlözer, *Nestor"*, p. 425. [28] Rubinshtein, *Russkaia istoriografiia*, p. 187.
[29] J. Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton, 2014), pp. 115–17.

products, the brilliant and iconoclastic Friedrich August Wolf. In his now classic study from 1795, *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, Wolf challenged many of the most fundamental assumptions of Enlightenment-era textual criticism. Perhaps most brazenly, he advanced the idea that there had never been a blind bard named Homer. The *Iliad* and the *Odysessy* were not the creation of a single poet, the scholar argued, but rather the combined work of multiple rhapsodists, separated in time by hundreds of years. These ancient singers had originally composed independent poems, which were only later stitched together to form the surviving texts.[30] Thus, where his predecessors had seen the work of a solitary myth-maker, Wolf perceived a much longer tradition of writing, collecting, editing, and copying. This revolutionary notion marked the beginning of a new movement in philological thought: one that would knock not only Homer from his pedestal, but eventually Nestor as well.

THE RISE OF SOURCE STUDIES

We should not imagine banners of revolt flying over the Russian Academy of Sciences at this time, however. As was so often the case with European intellectual trends, Wolf's ideas began to emerge in Russian scholarship only much later, after a delay of several decades. The first to adopt them for the study of chronicles was a Muscovite historian and bibliographer, Pavel Stroev, in his preface to the *Sophia Chronicle* (*Софийский временник*) from 1821. Drawing heavily on Wolf's insights, as well as those of his followers Gottfried Hermann and Karl Lachmann, Stroev put forward a fundamentally new conception of chronicle writing in early Rus.[31] He hypothesized that yearly chronicle entries, based on the observations of local eye-witnesses, had been kept in various towns and princedoms from a very early date. These original records were subsequently lost, but not before they were reworked by later scribes, far removed from the actual events. Like Schlözer before him, Stroev did not share a particularly high opinion of these monastic bookmen. In his estimation, they were 'ignorant compilers' who had thoughtlessly and mechanically combined several separate, earlier chronicles into much larger *sborniki*, or 'compilations', the oldest of which was the Laurentian Codex.[32]

Stroev's conception of these *sborniki* was very different from that of his predecessors. They were the work not of a single hand, but many. They contained materials not from one place or time, but from many locales

[30] *Ibid*., p. 118. [31] Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, pp. 136–43.
[32] P. M. Stroev, 'Predislovie', in *Sofiiskii vremennik* (Moscow, 1821), chs. 1–2.

and periods. The observation may seem obvious from a modern vantage point, yet at the time it was pathbreaking. With a single term, *sbornik*, Stroev had provided the key to a profoundly new understanding of what chronicles comprised and how they had developed their extant form. Such a change in perception naturally entailed a change in the methods and goals of scholarship. For Schlözer, the main problem had been determining how later copyists had deformed the text *after* its original composition in the early twelfth century. For Stroev and his successors, the principal issue was determining what sort of source materials had existed *before* the text was compiled and how those materials had been incorporated into the surviving manuscripts. Thus was born one of the pillars of modern Russian and Ukrainian chronicle studies: *istochnikovedenie* or 'source criticism'. The great hunt for the sources of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* had begun.

Four scholars writing and publishing in the mid-nineteenth century deserve special mention in this regard. In 1836, Vasilii Perevoshchikov became the first to doubt, in print, that Nestor was responsible for the most ancient chronicle records. He suggested that varying attitudes, differences in tone and narrative exposition, and peculiarities in word choice made it possible to distinguish the work of multiple earlier chroniclers.[33] Three years later, in 1839, the son of an emancipated serf, Mikhail Pogodin, also detected internal textual evidence of previous records. He argued against Schlözer's view that Nestor had relied exclusively on Byzantine sources and oral traditions, positing that the first chronicler had also drawn on earlier ecclesiastical or monastic records, local folk songs, Viking legends, and various Bulgarian materials.[34] A similar argument was advanced nearly a quarter century later by Izmail Sreznevskii, the dean of philology at St Petersburg University. He suggested that 'chronicle notes', comparable to the annals of western Europe, had been kept continuously in Rus since the early tenth century.[35] These notes were first written down in the margins of Paschal tables, the scholar claimed, after which they were merged with ancient oral traditions about the earliest Slavs, the founding of Kiev, and the visitation of the apostle Andrew, among others.

A contemporary of Sreznevskii's, Konstantin Bestuzhev-Riumin, likewise perceived the chronicle as a combination of constituent parts. He believed these elements were originally composed at princely courts

[33] V. M. Perevoshchikov, *O russkikh letopisiakh i letopisateliakh po 1240: Materialy dlia istorii rossiiskii slovestnosti* (St Petersburg, 1836).
[34] M. P. Pogodin, *Nestor, istoriko-kriticheskie rassuzhdeniia o nachale russkikh letopisei* (Moscow, 1839), pp. 45–79.
[35] I. I. Sreznevskii, *Chtenie o drevnikh russkikh letopisiakh* (St Petersburg, 1862).

throughout Rus and were only later sewn together into a unified work. The extant manuscripts appeared contradictory and heterogeneous, therefore, not simply because later monks had made errors and interpolations. Rather, the texts survived in that condition because they had been compiled from heterogeneous and contradictory sources to begin with. 'The chronicle is ... an encylopedic work, an archive,' the Russian nobleman explained, 'in which traces of the earliest native literature are preserved.'[36] Bestuzhev-Riumin envisaged this archive as housing two different kinds of written materials: earlier annals and 'independent tales'. Here he singled out passages about Askold and Dir, the founding of the Caves monastery, the conversion of Rus, the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb, and many others. He suggested that these accounts were created separately, as distinct literary works, before being combined with annalistic records at a later date. Rather than viewing the compilation of these sources as a destructive and deforming editorial act, however, Bestuzhev-Riumin presented a more positive appraisal. For the first time, the makers of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* were pictured not as 'simple-minded' clerics, but as men of talent, ingenuity, and at least some learning. Gone was the image of the mechanical and unthinking 'barbarian compiler' and in its place there arose a new figure: the creative and industrious literary editor.[37]

In summary, by the close of the 1860s chronicle studies in Russia had clearly made significant strides. The notion of the extant text as one man's masterpiece, in need of restoration, had given way to a rather different idea. The surviving text was now treated like a patchwork quilt and the task of the philologist was to find its 'seams': the places in the manuscripts where one tale had been stitched together with another. This brand of scholarship, pioneered by Bestuzhev-Riumin, proved very popular. Throughout the late nineteenth century, various chronicles were dissected into a multitude of parts, using a wide variety of competing and often contradictory criteria. The methods of textual fragmentation had, by all appearances, triumphed over those of textual reconstruction. But just when it seemed that the dream of a pristine original text had been abandoned, a new series of pathbreaking papers began to appear in St Petersburg. These works combined the insights of nineteenth-century *istochnikovedenie* with a sprawling, all-encompassing, comparative approach, not unlike that of Schlözer's from a hundred years earlier. Their author was also a young linguist and polymath, trained in the

[36] K. N. Bestuzhev-Riumin, *O sostave russkikh letopisei do kontsa XIV v.* (St Petersburg, 1868), p. 87.

[37] H. Klinger, *Konstantin Nikolaevič Bestužev-Rjumins Stellung in der russischen Historiographie und siene gesellschaftliche Tätigkeit* (Frankfurt, 1980) pp. 74–76. Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, p. 152.

traditions of German scholarship, and eager to change the prevailing view of early Rus historiography. Yet unlike Schlözer, this powerful new thinker was not content merely to reconstruct 'Nestor's original words'. He was determined, above all, to reconstruct the words of chroniclers who had lived and worked decades before Nestor ever took up a pen.

ALEKSEI ALEXANDROVICH SHAKHMATOV

In 1882, Aleksei Sobolevskii publicly defended his master's dissertation before the faculty of historical philology at Moscow University. His talk on 'Research in the Field of Russian Grammar' generated a lively discussion, particularly concerning his theories on proto-Slavic, a hypothetical reconstructed *Ursprache* believed to be the root of all modern Slavic languages. One of the most critical voices in the room that day was also among the unlikeliest. It belonged to an eighteen-year-old schoolboy, himself the author of a brief article on the origins of Slavic languages, who had been invited to the defence by Filipp Fortunatov, a professor in the department and the founder of the so-called Moscow linguistic school. Serving in the capacity of an unofficial opponent, the young man mustered the courage to make several critical remarks about the older scholar's work on phonemes. These critiques were met with murmurs of approbation from the professors in the room, a reaction which greatly irritated the more senior interlocutor. Sobolevskii ultimately passed the defence and embarked on a long and successful career in Russian academia. But he never forgot the name, nor forgave the performance, of the 'miracle child' who had dared to criticize his research: Aleksei Alexandrovich Shakhmatov.[38]

The precocious teenager graduated from *gimnazium* a year later. He enrolled at the university in Moscow and elected to study comparative historical linguistics under the guidance of Professor Fortunatov. There he was trained in the methods of the *Junggrammatiker*, a school of linguists associated with the University of Leipzig. During the 1870s, this group of scholars had developed an innovative 'comparative-historical method' for reconstructing the Indo-European proto-language. In the decade that followed, Fortunatov had made a name for himself in Moscow by adapting their approach to the study of proto-Slavic.[39] Thus, while Shakhmatov sat in his seminars and scribbled

[38] V. I. Makarov, *'Takogo ne byst' na Rusi prezhe . . . ': Povest' ob akademike A. A. Shakhmatove* (St Petersburg, 2000).

[39] Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, pp. 183–86.

down notes, he was being trained in scholarly practices only recently imported from eastern Germany. Fortunatov taught his pupils to view separate languages as branches of a vast, interconnected system. The first step was to identify which languages in this system were related to one another historically. These could then be divided from the others and treated like members of a single family with a single common past. Next, the languages in a given family were to be analysed comparatively, based on a variety of phonetic, orthographic, and etymological distinctions, many of which were microscopic in nature. By continuing in this fashion, Fortunatov believed that it was possible to discover the point in time when Russian and other Slavic languages had originated from a single common tongue. The final step was to reconstruct this ancient, long-lost language in its original form.[40]

The gifted new student soon took to his mentor's methods. They are plainly visible in both his university thesis, 'On Duration and Stress in Proto-Slavonic' from 1887, and in his master's dissertation from 1894, 'Research in the Field of Russian Phonetics'. Proving that there is no grudge like an academic one, the still disgruntled Sobolevskii responded with a scathing review of the latter work. The faculty committee was evidently unmoved, however, for they soon came to an extraordinary decision. Rather than awarding the candidate a master's diploma, as he had requested, the committee chose to confer the full doctoral degree. Shortly thereafter, at only thirty years of age, Shakhmatov became the youngest scholar ever selected for membership in the Academy of Sciences. It was a distinction he later justified with ground-breaking studies on the origins of Russian and the development of the literary language, in addition to important works on modern syntax, dialects, and historical morphology.

Shakhmatov is remembered today for much more than his linguistic research. Yet even his achievements outside the field are inseparable from the training he received in Moscow as a student.[41] For while investigating the earliest roots of the Russian language, the young scholar made frequent recourse to the earliest records of Rus historiography. He is said to have examined and committed to memory over 200 chronicle manuscripts, from the first specimens of the fourteenth century to the final copies of the seventeenth. Fairly early on in this process, Shakhmatov began to interpret the relationship among chronicles in much the same way he had been taught to interpret the relationship

40 F. F. Fortunatov, *Sravnitel'noe iazykovedenie: Obshchii kurs*, in *Izbrannye trudy* (Moscow, 1956), vol. I, pp. 22–30.

41 Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, p. 183.

between languages. He envisaged the surviving chronicle manuscripts as part of a gigantic, interconnected network. Just as one could systematically compare a family of languages and reconstruct their proto-language, he conjectured, so it was possible to compare related chronicle redactions systematically and to reconstruct the *svody*, or proto-chronicles, that had preceded them.[42]

Shakhmatov put this 'comparative-historical method' to work in a series of books and articles written between 1896 and 1920.[43] He seems to have imagined himself as something like an archaeologist. But rather than finding concrete objects in the ground, the linguist 'recovered' layer after layer of earlier, hypothetical *svody* from the extant manuscripts. Using an array of etymological, phonetic, grammatical, orthographic, literary, and historical criteria, he meticulously charted out the evolution of long-lost chronicle compilations and attempted to reconstruct their original contents. These labours culminated in 1908 with the release of his monumental *Investigations into the Most Ancient Russian Chronicle Compilations*.[44] The monograph was greeted by many contemporaries as the single most significant and revolutionary publication in the history of chronicle studies, a reputation which it continues to enjoy in some Russian academic circles even to the present day. Shakhmatov followed up with several additional major works on early Rus historiography. Foremost among these was a reconstructed edition of the chronicle text published in 1916, as well as another study composed in the same year, *The Tale of Bygone Years and its Sources*.[45] The latter work did not appear in print until 1940, however, exactly two decades after the scholar's tragic death from hunger and exhaustion in the years following the Russian Revolution.

It must be said that Shakhmatov was the author of dense and difficult books. They are characterized by innumerable twists and turns of argumentation, which artfully combine the broadest of speculations with microscopic attention to detail. For the sake of clarity, I shall therefore survey only the most basic aspects of the scholar's now classic theories, rather than rehearse the intricate philological proofs by which he arrived

42 A. A. Shakhmatov, 'Razbor sochineniia I. A. Tikhomirova "Obozrenie letopisnykh svodov Rusi severo-vostochnoi"', in *Otchet o sorokovom prisuzhdenii nagrad grafa Uvarova* (St Petersburg, 1899), pp. 103–236.

43 A. A. Shakhmatov, 'Drevneishie redaktsii Povesti vremennykh let', *ZhMNP*, 2 (1897), pp. 209–59. A. A. Shakhmatov, 'Khronologiia drevneishikh russkikh letopisnykh svodov', *ZhMNP*, 4 (1897), pp. 463–82. A. A. Shakhmatov, 'O Nachal'nom Kievskom letopisnom svode', *ChOIDR*, 1–3 (1897), pp. 1–58.

44 A. A. Shakhmatov, *RDRLS* (St Petersburg, 1908).

45 A. A. Shakhmatov, *Povest' vremennykh let*, vol. I (Prague, 1916). A. A. Shakhmatov, '"Povest vremennykh let" i ee istochniki', *TODRL* (1940), pp. 9–150.

at his conclusions.[46] The approach is schematic, but it should provide enough of a background to be useful in later chapters, where I shall treat Shakhmatov's analysis of specific chronicle entries in greater detail.

THE BEGINNING BEFORE THE BEGINNING

The key to understanding the so-called 'revolution of Shakhmatov' starts with the idea of a *svod*.[47] We are dealing here not simply with a change in terminology but with a fundamental shift in thinking about the nature of chronicles, the history of their compilation, and the motivations behind their making. Before Shakhmatov, the reigning interpretative model was that of the *sbornik* championed by Stroev, Bestuzhev-Riumin, and their late nineteenth-century followers. These thinkers had postulated the existence of earlier annals, independent written tales, Byzantine documents, and oral legends, but they generally treated the extant text of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* as the first collection of all such materials. Shakhmatov turned this chronology on its head. He believed that comparative analysis of the surviving manuscripts proved the existence of earlier, fully realized, non-extant chronicle redactions. In his view, the earliest stages of Kievan chronicle writing did not begin with the making of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* but rather ended with it. The extant text was not the first link of the chain: it was the final link in a succession of *svody* stretching back deep into the eleventh century.

How should we understand these *svody*? They were certainly not annals, which were kept continuously and gradually accumulated over time. Nor were they archives of various sources or copies of earlier compilations. For Shakhmatov, the making of a *svod* was something far more dynamic and subjective than any of these previous conceptions. In his view, every time a cleric sat down to write a new redaction, he was performing a decisive and creative editorial act.[48] The history writers of early Rus were not merely copyists or collectors. They were astute observers who crafted specific versions of the past for specific political reasons. They were author-editors who considered carefully all of the materials at their disposal and then judiciously reshaped them into an original narrative, expressing a particular ideological viewpoint.

[46] For a more detailed explanation of Shakhmatov's methods, see V. Iu. Aristov, *Aleksei Shakhmatov i ranee letopisanie: Metod, skhema, traditsiia* (Kiev, 2019); Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, pp. 167–267; Ia. S. Lur'e, 'O shakhmatovskoi metodike issledovaniia letopisnykh svodov', *Istochnikovedenie otechestvennoi istorii* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 87–107.

[47] V. Iu. Aristov, 'Perevorot O. O. Shakhmatova v istoriografii davn'rus'kogo litopisannia', *Ukraina v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii Evropi*, 14 (2014) pp. 207–29.

[48] A. Timberlake, 'Who Wrote the Laurentian Chronicle (1177–1203)?', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie*, 59, 2 (2000), p. 239.

The term *svod* therefore signified not only a new conception of chronicles but also a new conception of chroniclers. No longer were these men imagined as prayerful clerics corded off from the vanities and intrigues taking place outside the monastery walls.[49] On the contrary, in the hands of Shakhmatov, the chronicler was transformed into 'an experienced writer-official in the political chancellery of the prince'. He was now the ruler's 'official apologist and an obedient executor of his orders to rework public opinion from an ideological perspective'.[50] Thus it was in the writings of Shakhmatov that contemporaries encountered, for the first time, a conception of early Rus historiography that was more or less modern. The writing of history was perceived as a malleable, constructed, and politically motivated activity. The tools and methods of the linguist and philologist were combined with those of the historian and political theorist. The final result was a radically new picture of chronicle writing in eleventh-century Rus: one that was as precarious and hypothetical as it was exhilarating and unprecedented.

The basic contours of Shakhmatov's scheme are well known. He maintained that three redactions of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* were made in Kiev in the early twelfth century. The first was written by Nestor at the Monastery of the Caves in 1113, the second by the abbot Sil'vestr at Saint Michael's Monastery in Vydubychi in 1116, and the third by an anonymous monk of the Caves in 1118.[51] Unlike his predecessors, Shakhmatov did not view these redactions as the original compilation. Rather, while comparing them with another early chronicle source, the 'younger recension' of the *Novgorodian First Chronicle*, he came to the conclusion that there was a common source text underlying both manuscript traditions. The philologist called this hypothetical text the *nachal'nyi svod* or 'beginning compilation' and dated its creation to the middle of the 1090s.[52] Upon closer examination, however, the *nachal'nyi svod* also showed signs of being compiled. It too contained numerous interpolations, duplications, and contradictions. There were errors in chronology, grammar, and syntax. Certain passages contained differing lexicons, phraseologies, and authorial sympathies. Such inconsistencies led Shakhmatov to conclude that there was a still older *svod* underlying the 'beginning compilation'. He attributed this layer to the pen of Nikon,

[49] M. D. Priselkov, 'Russkoe letopisanie v trudakh A. A. Shakhmatova', *Izvestiia AN SSSR*, 5 (1946), pp. 418–28.
[50] I. P. Eremin, *Povest' vremennykh let: Problemy ee istoriko-literaturnogo izucheniia* (Leningrad, 1947), pp. 37–39.
[51] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. iv, xi, 1–3.
[52] A. A. Shakhmatov, 'Kievskii nachal'nyi svod 1095 g.', in S. P. Obnorskii (ed.), *A. A. Shakhmatov, 1864–1920: Sbornik statei i materialov* (Moscow, 1947), pp. 117–60.

an abbot of the Caves Monastery, and placed the date of composition at 1073.[53] Yet even this hypothetical predecessor of a hypothetical predecessor was not the final link in the chain. The scholar continued to find seams, insertions, and incongruities. He therefore proposed the existence of a still earlier chronicle layer: the *drevneishii kievskii svod* or 'most ancient Kievan compilation' of 1039. Shakhmatov imagined this document as the narrative core upon which all later Kievan chronicle writing was founded. He suggested its authors were clerics at the newly built cathedral of St Sophia who had been directed to write the first native history by the new Greek metropolitan, Feopempt, a hierarch only recently arrived from Constantinople.[54]

Thus, by comparatively investigating manuscripts of much later provenance, Shakhmatov arrived at a number of strikingly precise conclusions about the historiography of early Rus. Some of these were based on philological and linguistic data, others on historical and political speculations, and still others on a combination of the two. The dating of the compilations is a good example of this tendency. The years 1113, 1093–95, 1073, and 1039 were hardly chosen at random. Each was connected with a major political event in Kievan history, an event which Shakhmatov viewed as the catalyst for the making of a new chronicle. The most common catalyst was the accession of a new grand prince or the consecration of a new cathedral or church hierarch.

Here it is perhaps helpful to return to the earlier metaphor of the matryoshka. Again, we can think of Shakhmatov's system much like one of these multi-layered dolls, with each layer bearing the image of the prince responsible for its creation. In this scenario, the 1113 redaction is adorned with the likeness of the newly enthroned Vladimir Monomakh. This figure opens to reveal the *nachal'nyi svod*, displaying the portrait of Sviatopolk II, the prince who ascended to the heights of power in 1093. Within that layer we discover the *svod* of 1073, created in the year that Sviatoslav II took his turn upon the Kievan throne. Lastly, we come to the *drevneishii kievskii svod* and discover painted upon its shell the portrait of Iaroslav the Wise, the man responsible for building Saint Sophia in the mid-eleventh century.

As these examples make clear, Shakhmatov's system was more than a purely philological exercise. Yet similar to Schlözer a century before him, the linguist's ultimate goal remained the reconstruction of long-lost original sources. Everything else, the hypothetical dates and authors and political situations, was only a means to that end. 'Real texts, in themselves, did not interest Shakhmatov', explains Varvara Vovina-Lebedeva.

[53] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. 420–60. [54] *Ibid*., pp. 416–17.

'They appealed to him only as raw materials, which he could use to penetrate through time and behold *svody*.'[55] Particularly telling in this respect is that Shakhmatov considered his crowning achievement to be the texts appended to the conclusion of his magnum opus, *Investigations*. There we find a version of early Rus historigraphy that even Schlözer could scarcely have imagined: not the 'restored' text of Nestor, nor even the 'beginning compilation' of the 1090s, but rather two fully reconstructed versions of the Nikon *svod* and the most ancient Kievan *svod*. It was nothing short of a philological miracle. A scholar in twentieth-century St Petersburg, working with texts from fourteenth-century Suzdal and fifteenth-century Novgorod, had reconstructed the original historical record of eleventh-century Kiev.

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS

Reactions to Shakhmatov's programme have been diverse and deeply divided. On one end of the spectrum, there are those who view his theories as a truly revolutionary break with all that preceded them. Scholars in this camp treat Shakhmatov's system of *svody* as the defining discovery in the history of the field, illuminating the path ahead for all future generations. They generally accept the linguist's methods, if not all of his conclusions, and seek to modify, correct, and add to his findings. Representative of this group are the works of Mikhail Priselkov, Dmitrii Likhachev, Lev Cherepnin, Arsenii Nasonov, Mikhail Tikhomirov, Iakov Lur'e, Mark Aleshkovskii, and Oleg Tvorogov.[56] More recent adherents of the tradition include Aleksei Gippius, Nadezhda Miliutenko, Alan Timberlake, Viktor Ziborov, Constantine Zuckerman, Timofei Gimon, and Savva Mikheev.[57]

[55] Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly isselodvaniia*, p. 205.

[56] M. D. Priselkov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–XV* (Leningrad, 1939). D. S. Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi i ikh kul'turno-istoricheskoe znachenie* (Leningrad, 1947). D. S. Likhachev, *Povest' vremennykh let: Podgotovka teksta, perevod, stat'i, i kommentarii D. S. Likhacheva* (St Petersburg, 1996), pp. 299–351. L. V. Cherepnin, ''Povest' vremennykh let', ee redaktsii i predshestvuiushchie ei letopisnye svody', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 25 (1948), pp. 302–33. A. N. Nasonov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–nachala XVIII v.: Ocherki i issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1969). M. N. Tikhomirov, *Russkoe letopisanie* (Moscow, 1979). Ia. S. Lur'e, *Obshcherusskie letopisi XIV–XV vv.* (Leningrad, 1976), pp. 27–65. Ia. S. Lur'e, 'O shakhmatovskoi metodike issledovaniia letopisnykh svodov', in *Istochnikovedenie otechestvennoi istorii* (Moscow, 1975), vol. II, pp. 87–107. M. Kh. Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Sud'ba literaturnogo proizvedeniia v Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1971). O. V. Tvorogov, 'Povest' vremennykh let i Nachal'nyi svod: (Tekstologicheskii kommentarii), *TODRL*, 30 (1976), pp. 3–26.

[57] A. A. Gippius, 'Dva nachala Nachal'noi letopisi: K istorii kompozitsii Povesti vremennykh let', in A. M. Moldovan (ed.), *Verenitsa liter: K 60-letiiu V. M. Zhivova* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 56–96. A. A. Gippius, 'K probleme redaktsii Povesti vremennykh let I', *Slavianovedenie*, 5 (2007),

Like Shakhmatov, these thinkers perceive several different chronicle layers, dating from the late tenth century to the early twelfth, underlying the extant manuscripts. There is precious little agreement among them about what to call these layers, where they originated and when, or the reasons for their writing. Every scholar has a different scheme, typically comprising three to five different *svody*, which they distinguish from one another according to a wide variety of criteria. The majority of these schemes closely resemble Shakhmatov's: they too consist of three redactions from the 1110s, an earlier layer from the 1090s, an even earlier layer from the 1060–70s, and a non-annalistic narrative core, usually assigned to the 1030s–40s, although sometimes pushed back as far as 1016–17 or even 996. Researchers in this tradition usually focus on reconstructing the contents of these hypothetical texts and attempt to determine their dates and authors, as well as the historical circumstances surrounding their creation. They are also likely to extend such speculations a step further, as Shakhmatov so often did, and conjecture about the non-extant sources comprising the non-extant chronicle layers. The end result is a vast and extremely rich body of scholarship, characterized by exceptional linguistic erudition, which tends to focus on hypothetical texts, often at the expense of the surviving materials.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who maintain serious doubts about Shakhmatov's discoveries. Members of this camp are sceptical of his fundamental premises and unconvinced by his elaborate deductive proofs. They tend to criticize the excessively hypothetical nature of his argumentation and complain about the scholar's inconsistency, or as one contemporary put it, his 'strange manner of renouncing in April precisely what he had said in March'.[58] They also reject the notion that chronicle studies were born, like Athena from the head of Zeus, from the pen of Shakhmatov alone. They view his work not as a revolutionary rupture with all previous studies, but rather as the

pp. 20–44. A. A. Gippius, 'K probleme redaktsii Povesti vremennykh let II', *Slavianovedenie*, 2 (2008), pp. 3–24. A. A. Gippius, 'Do i posle Nachal'nogo svoda: ranniaia letopisnaia istoriia Rusi kak ob''ekt tekstologicheskoi rekonstruktsii', in N. A. Makarov (ed.), *Rus' v IX–X vekakh: Arkheologicheskaia panorama (*Moscow, 2012), pp. 36–63. N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir i kreshchenie Rusi: Drevneishie pis'mennye istochniki* (St Petersburg, 2008). N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatye kniaz'ia-mucheniki Boris i Gleb* (St Petersburg, 2006). A. Timberlake, 'Redactions of the Primary Chronicle', *Russkii iazyk v nauchnom osveshchenii*, 1 (2001), pp. 196–218. V. K. Ziborov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia XI–XVIII vv.* (St Petersburg, 2002), pp. 25–60. C. Zuckerman, 'Nabliudeniia nad slozheniem drevneishikh istochnikov letopisi', in C. Zuckerman (ed.), *Boriso-Glebskii sbornik, Collectanea Borisoglebica* (Paris, 2009), vol. I, pp. 183–306. T. V. Gimon and A. A. Gippius, 'Russkoe letopisanie v svete tipologicheskikh parallelei', in Iu. Ivanova (ed.), *Zhanry i formy v pis'mennoi kul'ture Srednevekov'ia* (Moscow, 2005), pp. 174–200. S. M. Mikheev, *Kto pisal 'Povest' vremennykh let'?* (Moscow, 2011).

58 Cited in Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, p. 280.

continuation of a long and venerable tradition dating to the days of Schlözer. Notable scholars of this persuasion include Vasilii Istrin, Nikolai Nikol'skii, Sergei Bugoslavskii, Dmitrii Abramovich, Alexander Brückner, Igor Eremin, and Apollon Kuz'min.[59]

In the post-Soviet era, the discourse surrounding Shakhmatov has assumed a less hagiographical and more polemical tone. Some researchers are particularly wary of the Soviet-era 'cult of Shakhmatov'. They bristle at his nearly impregnable status as the father of the field and as a researcher of singular genius. These thinkers are more likely to attribute the scholar's preeminent position to the unique historical and academic contexts leading to his 'canonization' in Soviet academia, rather than to the accuracy or irrefutability of his ideas. Members of this school are unafraid, moreover, to analyse and overturn many of Shakhmatov's most celebrated theories, such as the existence of the *nachal'nyi svod*, and to call into question even the most basic pillars of the Soviet-Russian textual tradition.[60] Among this group of researchers we can count Ludolph Müller, Donald Ostrowski, Igor Danilevskii, Aleksei Tolochko, Aleksandr Bobrov, Tetiana Vilkul, Vadim Aristov, and, to a lesser degree, Gelian Prokhorov, V. N. Rusinov, and Dmitrii Bulanin.[61] It should be said that not all of these scholars necessarily reject

[59] V. M. Istrin, 'Shakhmatov kak uchenyi', *IORIaS*, 25 (1922), pp. 23–43. Istrin, 'Zamechaniia o nachale russkogo letopisaniia, pp. 220–30. N. K. Nikol'skii, 'Povest' vremennykh let, kak istochnik dlia istorii nachal'nogo perioda russkoi pis'mennosti i kul'tury', in *Sbornik po russkomu iazyku i slovestnosti* (Leningrad, 1930), vol. II, pp. 3–6. S. A. Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologiia Drevnei Rusi, T. 1: Povest' vremennykh let*, ed. Iu. A. Artamonov (Moscow, 2006), vol. I, pp. 21–27. D. I. Abramovich, 'Trudy A. A. Shakhmatova v oblasti istorii russkoi literatury', *IORIaS*, 25 (1922), pp. 113–15. A. Brückner, 'Rozdział z Nestora', *Zapysky Naukovogo tovarystva im. Shevchenka*, 141–43 (1925), pp. 1–15. I. P. Eremin, '*Povest' vremennykh let' kak pamiatnik literatury* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 42–97. A. G. Kuz'min, *Nachal'nye etapy drevnerusskogo letopisaniia* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 31–48.

[60] T. L. Vilkul, *Litopis i Khronograph: Studii z tekstologii domongol's'kogo kiivs'kogo litposannia* (Kiev, 2015). Tolochko, *Ocherki nachal'noi Rusi*, pp. 20–68

[61] L. Müller, *Poniat' Rossiiu: Istoriko-kul'turnye issledovaniia* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 141–82. D. Ostrowski, 'The Načal'nyj Svod theory and the Povest' vremennykh let', *Russian Linguistics*, 31 (Dordrecht, 2007), pp. 269–308. I. N. Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Germenevticheskie osnovy istochnikovedeniia letopisnykh tekstov* (Moscow, 2004), pp. 33–55. A. Tolochko, 'Perechityvaia pripisku Sil'vestra 1116 g., *Ruthenica*, 7 (2008), pp. 154–65. A. G. Bobrov, 'Shakhmatov i spornye voprosy rannego novgorodskogo letopisaniia', in O. N. Krylov and M. N. Priemyshev (eds.), *Akademik A. A. Shakhmatov: Zhizn', tvorchestvo, nauchnoe issledovanie. Sbornik statei k 150-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia uchenogo* (St Petersburg, 2015), pp. 242–50. T. L. Vilkul, 'Novgorodskaia pervaia letopis' i Nachal'nyi svod', *Palaeoslavica* 11 (2003), pp. 5–35. T. L. Vilkul, 'Povest' vremennykh let i Khronograf', *Palaeoslavica* 15 (2007), pp. 56–116. V. Iu. Aristov, 'Shakhmatovskie issledovaniia letopisei v evropeiskom kontekste XIX– nachala XX v.', in Krylov and Priemyshev (eds.), *Akademik A. A. Shakhmatov*, pp. 226–41. Aristov, 'Svod, sbornik, ili khronika? (O kharaktere drevnerusskikh letopisnikh pamiatnikov XI–XIII vv.', *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*, 1 (2013), pp. 105–29. G. M. Prokhorov, *Drevnerusskoe letopisanie: Vzgliad v nepovtorimoe* (Moscow, 2014), pp. 246–68. V. N. Rusinov, 'Letopisnye stat'i 1051–1117 gg. V sviazi c problemoi avtorstva i redaktsii "Povesti vremennykh let"', *Vestnik Nizhegorodskogo*

the notion of a *svod* or the goals of 'textology', more generally. Some, such as Tolochko, Vilkul, and Aristov, do seem to regard the whole attempt to identify earlier compilations as too speculative, while others simply dispute the methods and conclusions pertaining to specific hypotheses.

For all of their differences, however, there is at least one trait that the two camps share in common. No matter which side of the debate scholars find themselves on, whether nodding with the faithful or objecting with the unbelieving, the words and ideas of Shakhmatov are almost always at the centre of attention. 'As far as chronicle writing is concerned', writes Vovina-Lebedeva, 'all further study of its history in the twentieth century has essentially been ongoing arguments with Shakhmatov regarding the particulars of his scheme or his research methods. This is true not only for the followers of his ideas, but for opponents as well.'[62] As a result, for over a hundred years, the writings of one man have cast a long shadow over any attempt to study the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. Indeed, one sometimes gets the sense that the entire history of the field is but a footnote to Shakhmatov. Couple this with the particularly partisan atmosphere of Russian academic culture, and one is left with the impression that neutrality is simply not an option. One is either with Shakhmatov and his school or against them, but a choice must be made, a flag must be planted. There can be no agnostics on the field of philological battle.

LITURGY AND THE RUS PRIMARY CHRONICLE

Yet an agnostic I shall remain. For one of the merits of my argument is that there is no need to choose a side. As far as my findings are concerned, it does not matter whether the *Rus Primary Chronicle* was compiled in 1118, 1095, 1073, 1039, 1017, 996 or any other hypothetical date. Likewise, it does not matter whether it was the creation of a single scribe working at a single time in a single place, or the work of many scribes labouring in many locales over the course of many centuries. Nor does it matter who was the reigning prince, or who the ruling bishop, or which way the political winds happened to be blowing. In early Rus these things were temporary and ever shifting: the Roman technology at the centre of this study was not. Princes, bishops, and chroniclers came and went, but the services of the Byzantine rite remained virtually unchanged. In every era, at every stage of the chronicle's making, clerics prayed essentially the

universiteta im. N. I. Lobachevskogo. Seriia' Istoriia (2003), pp. 111–47. D. M. Bulanin, 'Tekstologiia drevnerusskoi literatury: Retrospektivnye zametki po metodologii', *Russkaia literatura*, 1 (2014), pp. 21–33, 49–50.

[62] Vovina-Lebedeva, *Shkoly issledovaniia*, pp. 226–27.

same prayers, sang roughly the same songs, and celebrated basically the same liturgical feasts. Daily immersion in the divine services thereby ensured that every generation of chroniclers received a nearly identical education in sacred history. Through ritual repetition, every generation learned the same liturgical narratives. Through ritual continuity, every generation experienced the same liturgical past. The sacred rites therefore shaped not only the original composition of the chronicle, whenever and however that may have occurred. They also continuously shaped how the text was understood and edited for centuries afterwards.

Once we begin to view the issue in these terms, it becomes clear that a lacuna does indeed exist in the critical literature. For nearly 250 years, scholars have meticulously sought out and identified the materials comprising the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. They have speculated about non-extant *svody*, reconstructed hypothetical urtexts, theorized about long-lost earlier tales, identified a vast number of possible textual sources, and conjectured at length about the number of chroniclers and their possible identities. Yet despite the vast literature on the subject, scholars appear to have overlooked one of the most important sources of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*: the liturgical services of the Byzantine church. The oversight is the more remarkable, as noted earlier, because 70 per cent of all surviving manuscripts from the Kievan period are translations of liturgical texts. Scholars have searched far and wide for possible sources and all but neglected the main form of native Kievan literacy, the church book. I do not wish to imply here that earlier textological approaches are therefore irrelevant, unnecessary, or inaccurate. I wish only to draw attention to an aspect of early medieval society – a narrative ritual technology imported from the Byzantines – that has yet to be considered in the scholarly literature.

At this point, I should like to anticipate a few possible objections. Surely, some critics might suggest, I am overstating my argument and ignoring previous works that mention liturgy in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. Did not Shakhmatov himself note the presence of Old Testament readings from the Prophetologion (*Паримийник*)?[63] And can it really be possible that pre-Revolutionary scholars, who lived and worked in a still profoundly Christian society, never perceived and commented on these ritual elements? Such scepticism is perfectly reasonable. Nevertheless, an exhaustive search for comparable earlier works has yielded little, apart from the unpublished dissertation of Elena Osokina, a short article by Aleksei Gippius concerning the title of the chronicle, and a series of articles, published during the writing of this book, by the

[63] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. 164–77.

Bulgarian scholar, Iliana Chekova.[64] As far as I can gather, these four are the only scholars who make any substantial mention of liturgy in regard to the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. Nor should we exaggerate Shakhmatov's contribution, since he pointed only to a possible source of a biblical text and did not discuss the content of the services themselves, let alone their implications.

Osokina is thus the real pioneer in this matter rather than Shakhmatov. It was she who first realized in the mid-1990s that a supposedly 'historical' chronicle passage comprised, at least partly, materials from East Roman liturgical hymns. Yet even Osokina failed to perceive the full extent of her discovery. For the liturgical elements in the chronicle go far beyond a handful of citations in one passage for one princess. In fact, as I shall demonstrate in the chapters to come, readings, prayers, and hymns from the Byzantine rite appear throughout the passages for Olga, Vladimir, and Boris and Gleb. Some ideas, once articulated, seem to be obvious. We should not assume that they were therefore observed and investigated long ago.

The research of Nikolai Serebrianskii is particularly instructive in this regard. Born in 1872 into the family of an Orthodox priest, Serebrianskii followed in his father's footsteps and trained as a seminarian, first in the Pskov Theological Seminary and later at the more prestigious Moscow Theological Academy. During his time there, he was tonsured as a *psalomshchik*, or reader, an entry-level clerical position that required him to read, chant, and sing at the divine services on a regular basis. The young man eventually decided to forgo a clerical career and surrender his fate to a different sort of heirarchical guild system: that of professional academia. He rose slowly through the ranks at a number of seminaries in Russia, before eventually accepting a professorship at his alma mater in Moscow. Serebrianskii wrote extensively on the religious and monastic history of his native Pskov, and also expended considerable energies researching the hagiography of medieval Rus, from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries. These interests culminated in 1915 with the publication of *The Princely Saints' Lives of Ancient Rus*, a work which remains widely known and respected today.[65]

The opening chapter of this study is devoted to the vitae of 'Saint Equal-of-the-Apostles Olga' and 'Saint Equal-of-the-Apostles Vladimir'.

[64] E. A. Osokina, 'Metodologicheskie problemy sootnosheniia gimnograficheskikh i agiograficheskikh proizvedenii', *Gimnologia* (2000), pp. 178–87. A. A. Gippius, '"Povest' vremennykh let": O vozmozhnom proiskhozhdenii i znachenii nazvaniia', *Cyrillomethodiana*, 15–16 (1993), pp. 7–23. I. Chekova, 'Letopisnaia pokhvala kniagine Ol'ge v Povesti vremennykh let: Poetika i tekstologicheskie dogadki', *DR*, 52, 54 (2013), pp. 92–103, 103–107.

[65] N. I. Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkie kniazheskiia zhitiia* (Moscow, 1915).

Like his more celebrated contemporary, Aleksei Shakhmatov, Serebrianskii believed that the first native accounts for these figures originated as independent clerical tales, which were later incorporated into the most ancient chronicle redactions sometime in the first half of the eleventh century.[66] These narratives were subsequently merged with excerpts from later works, such as Hilarion's *Sermon on Law and Grace* and Iakov the Monk's *Memory and Praises to St Vladimir*, in order to form the earliest official hagiographical works.[67] Since these early vitae reproduced much of the same content found in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, Serebrianskii was in an excellent position to become the first scholar to identify the liturgical sources of the national conversion myth. Yet he did nothing of the sort: this son of a priest and former *psalomshchik* never made the slightest suggestion that the ancient chronicles contained elements from the liturgy. He did propose that later chronicles incorporated materials from the lives of the saints, and, conversely, that the earliest vitae sometimes drew upon chronicle records. He also noted that hagiographies were occasionally a source for the writing of native liturgical services.[68] But he never admitted the possibility that a chronicle passage could derive, even in part, from a liturgical service. Indeed, he was quite sceptical that the services played any sort of historical role at all. 'In general,' he wrote near the end of his study, 'the services for the princes have no independent historical or biographical significance'.[69] Thus, much like Schlözer and Shakhmatov before him, Serebrianskii failed to distinguish the liturgical components underpinning the myth of Christian origins for the land of Rus.

How can we explain this rather surprising omission? Serebrianskii had been raised in a clerical family, trained as a priest, and tonsured as a minor cleric. It was his job to know the services forwards and backwards. He had then spent much of his life in the environs of Russia's most revered monastic institution, the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra, on whose grounds the theological academy was located. If anyone was going to spot the liturgical references in the chronicle passages, it should have been Serebrianskii. So how did he fail to connect the dots, when he had the chronicles, the church services, and the *vitae* right in front of him? I suspect that the very upbringing and education that made him so familiar with the liturgy was also responsible for keeping his research within certain acceptable bounds. It is one thing to note that some liturgical services may contain materials from earlier hagiographies. It is quite another to suggest that the national myth of origins might never have actually happened: that the saving deeds of the Rurikid dynasty may

[66] *Ibid*., pp. 5–7, 79–81. [67] *Ibid*., pp. 43–80. [68] *Ibid*., p. 292. [69] *Ibid*., p. 293.

be no more than narrative constructs, local adaptations of a foreign mythology. For a man in Serebrianskii's position, the chronicle tales could not have derived from Byzantine hymns, because then there would be no more truth, no more stable ground, no more trustworthy national history, and only the kaleidoscope of perceptions that characterizes the modern view of early medieval historiography. Needless to say, this was not a position that would have won him many supporters among the churchmen and faculty at the Saint Sergius Lavra.

Such was the case with Serebrianskii, the seminary professor. But what of his more worldly predecessors, Schlözer and Shakhmatov? Even in their own lifetimes, they walked the streets of St Petersburg and passed church after church, in which the divine services were performed morning, midday, and night. These two men were literally surrounded by one of the sources of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* and yet they failed to perceive it. How was this possible? Why were liturgical texts and services so neglected and misunderstood by even the most talented of philologists for so long? One possible answer is that many post-Enlightenment intellectuals simply did not go to church. They were members of a social and cultural elite that was already thoroughly secularized: a community of scientific and positivistic rationalists, not bearded, believing monks. They did not accept the church's teachings, they did not attend the services, and thus they could not have known the contents of the church books well enough to recognize their traces in other texts.[70]

Still, the secularization of certain segments of the intellegentsia does not wholly explain the neglect of liturgical manuscripts among students of the chronicles. One can study the church books without needing to believe that they contain a smidgeon of truth. Unbelief does not prevent anyone from opening the Menaion or Euchologion and perusing their contents. What might very well prevent that, however, is an academic infrastructure implicitly founded on anti-monastic, anti-ritualistic, and text-centric principles. And this is precisely the ideology from which the practice of modern philology was born: for as we have seen throughout this chapter, the Russian philological tradition was the child of German higher criticism, which was in turn the child of German biblical criticism, which was itself the child of the Protestant reformation.[71] The hermeneutical principles still used today to study literary and historical texts thereby originated in a setting in which the authority of ritual was largely

[70] On the secularization of the Russian intelligentsia, see V. Frede, *Doubt, Atheism, and the Nineteenth-Century Russian Intelligentsia* (Madison, 2011).

[71] J. Barton, *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville, 2007), pp. 120–22. W. Pannenberg, *Grunfragen systematischer Theologie* (Göttingen, 1967), pp. 1–15. G. Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia, 1963), p. 55.

rejected and replaced with the individual's private reading and studying of sacred texts. Sixteenth-century church reformers were not particularly sympathetic to monks or medieval liturgy, and neither were the pioneers of biblical criticism, such as Schlözer's adviser, Johann David Michaelis.[72]

My suggestion is that neither Schlözer, nor Shakhmatov, nor any of their followers ever perceived elements of liturgy in the chronicles because the entire history of their profession made it virtually impossible for them to do so. They identified elements from the Bible with ease because this was a text that could be read and studied like a modern book, using the techniques and models of their German teachers. But they failed to distinguish the liturgical origins of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, I suspect, because they did not recognize that the hymns, readings, and prayers of the Byzantine church also told a sacred story. The traditions of modern philology trained these thinkers to analyse the historiographical past, but in so doing it blinded them to the existence of the liturgical past. It taught them to view the church books as unimportant and undeserving of academic study, as page after page of 'nonsense' and 'fairytales' copied down by 'ignorant monks of the Middle Ages'. Yet as we shall see in the next chapter, that is not what the church books were at all. On the contrary, once we begin to understand how the chroniclers used them, and how they prayed and sang from them over the course of a day, a week, and a year, we shall come to see these materials in a profoundly new light. We shall learn that they were not simply texts or sources like any other. Rather, we shall find that they are the surviving artefacts of a Roman storytelling technology that enveloped its participants in a very special kind of narrative world. Performing the liturgy was not like sitting at a desk and reading from a chronicle or chronograph or saint's life. It was not like listening to oral tales or epic poems. Celebrating the services of the Byzantine rite was a far more immersive, repetitive, and ultimately transformative kind of activity. It was a daily, weekly, yearly journey through the sacred history of the Jews, the early church, and the Christian Roman Empire. If we wish to recover the role of liturgy in the early Middle Ages, then we too must go on this journey. We must learn to use the church books as medieval clerics used them, and we must learn to listen to the story that liturgy is telling.

I shall therefore endeavour in the next chapter to follow a clerical chronicler through a typical service at the twelfth-century Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, from the moment he hears the call to prayer to the final

[72] For evidence of a similar attitude among nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians, see G. Constable, 'From Church History to Religious Culture: The Study of Medieval Life and Spirituality', in Miri Rubin (ed.), *European Religious Cultures: Essays Offered to Christopher Brooke on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* (London, 2008), pp. 3–4.

blessing pronounced by the priest from the ambo. In the meantime, insofar as it is possible, I shall attempt to name and describe every church book that he takes up in his hands, and every sort of hymn, prayer, and reading that leaves his lips. It is my hope, in so doing, that a modern academic audience will perhaps gain a glimpse into how the liturgy was lived and experienced, day after day, year after year, by the men responsible for writing history in early Rus.

Chapter 3

VESPERS AT THE KIEV MONASTERY OF THE CAVES

The problem with medieval church books was summarized succinctly by an eleventh-century cleric, Nikon of the Black Mountain, in the preface to his typicon. During the process of assembling the rule, the Byzantine monk encountered a number of difficulties. 'I came upon and collected different typica, of Stoudios and of Jerusalem,' he wrote. 'And one did not agree with the other, neither Stoudite with another Stoudite one, nor Jerusalem ones with Jerusalem ones. And, greatly perplexed by this, I interrogated the wise ones and the ancients, and those having knowledge of these matters.'[1] What Nikon complained about was the lack of standardization among the liturgical texts of his day. No two copies of the typicon were identical, he discovered, and the same was true of the rest of the church books, such as the Menaion and Horologion. These manuscripts could contain contradictory instructions for the same feast, or listed different feasts for the same date, or exhibited fluctuating forms of translation, spelling, and abbreviation, to name only a few of the discrepancies. How was Nikon supposed to know which texts to trust, and which practices to write down in his own typicon, when the manuscripts available to him suggested a number of possible practices?

The same dilemma confronts modern students of the Byzantine rite when they wish to reconstruct the liturgical practices of Nikon's era. Contemporary scholars face additional difficulties, however, since the vast majority of the texts required for such an endeavour have been lost. The elements which endure are only pieces of a much larger and long-lost whole: a few scattered stones, clinging to their original place in a vast and badly damaged mosaic. These texts come from church books, or fragments of church books, which at one time belonged to a full set of liturgical volumes. Regrettably, a complete set of church books does

[1] Cited from R. Taft, 'Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite', *DOP*, 42 (1988), p. 179.

not survive from any of the monasteries or churches of early Rus. Manuscripts from Kiev are particularly rare, moreover, because of the devastation wrought by the Mongol invasions in the mid-thirteenth century. As a result, the only possible way to narrate what a given service might have looked like in the city is to rely on reconstructions made by comparative liturgists, while drawing at the same time on the relatively few eleventh- and twelfth-century liturgical texts that have managed to survive from those cities left intact by the Mongols, such as Novgorod. This strategy is not without its faults and limitations, to be sure, yet it will allow me to attempt something novel, to carry out a kind of experiment in academic prose. To the best of my knowledge, no one has thought to turn the specialized liturgical scholarship on pre-Mongol Rus into a historical narrative accessible to the lay person. This is precisely the task that I have set for myself in the present chapter, however, and I have chosen as my topic only a single, relatively short service from the daily cycle of corporate worship.

THE CALL TO PRAYER

The liturgical day did not begin at dawn. It began at dusk of the preceding evening. Like most events at the monastery, it was set in motion by a blessing from the hegumen (*игоумен*). At the appointed hour, the sacristan (*парамонарь*) appeared before the superior and performed a full prostration. Rising to his feet, he repeated the usual formula: 'Give your blessing, holy father.' The hegumen blessed him with the words, 'God save you', and the junior monk departed to perform his daily obedience. He climbed the steep hill towards the main church and stopped at the semantron (*било*), an ancient musical instrument reminiscent of a gong. Taking up a small mallet, or perhaps two, the sacristan began to strike the long wooden plank with rhythmic, percussive blows. As he played, he called out to the brethren in a loud voice, again and again, 'Bless, holy ones . . . bless, holy ones . . . bless, holy ones.'[2]

The sound of the semantron was very familiar to the monks of the Monastery of the Caves in early twelfth-century Kiev. They awoke to it every morning and heard it at regular intervals throughout the day and night.[3] The drumming summoned them to the morning worship service (*заоутрьни*) and the eucharistic rite (*божественная литургия*). It alerted them to the liturgy of the hours (*часы*) and perhaps also to

[2] Descriptions of the blessing ritual and the playing of the semantron appear in *TAS*, pp. 371, 398, 402, 409–10. On the history of the semantron in Byzantium and Rus, see M. V. Esipova, 'Bilo', in *PE* (Moscow, 2009), vol. V, pp. 211–14.

[3] J. C. Anderson and S. Parenti, *A Byzantine Monastic Office, AD 1105* (Washington DC, 2016), p. 25.

compline (*повечерие*) and the midnight office (*полунощница* or *чин полунощний*).[4] Now, as the sun set behind the hills to the west of the monastery, the sacristan 'struck the board' in order to call the brethren to vespers (*мефимон* or *вечерня)*, the evening rite that marked the beginning of a new feast day, and thus a new cycle of liturgical services.[5]

The distinctive figure of monks was soon visible in the twilight. Some emerged from their cells, where they had been praying and chanting the Psalter, or else doing manual crafts such as plaiting sandals and spinning wool. Others came out from the refectory and kitchen garden, where moments earlier they had been tending to the fire, baking bread, or digging herbs.[6] Still others made their way from the scriptorium, where they had been binding books, copying church services, or perhaps adding an entry to the chronicle records.[7] All of these activities ceased, however, at the moment of the sacristan's cry. For there was no task or obedience, no ascetic feats or private prayers, that took precedence over attendance at the divine services. The brothers of the Caves practised a form of monasticism known as cenobitism, which had originated in the deserts of Egypt in the late fourth century.[8] They lived together, worked together, ate together, and most importantly of all, worshipped together. They were not hermits seeking solitude, but rather brothers in Christ devoted to corporate worship.[9] The monastery's typicon, or rule, was unambiguous in this regard: 'Always and without interruption should the liturgy be served in the monastery.'[10] Or as one thirteenth-century Rus bishop, himself an alumnus of the Caves, wrote to a disciple: 'Do not tell lies and absent yourself from the congregation in church . . . For whatever you do in your cell, it is of no value, whether you read the Psalter, or sing twelve psalms: this cannot be compared to a single "Lord, have mercy" said in the congregation.'[11]

[4] On the order of services in early medieval Slavonic-language Horologion of the Stoudite tradition, see E. E. Sliva, 'Chasoslovy studiiskoi traditsii v slavianskikh spiskakh XIII–XV vekov (klassifikatsiia po osobennostiam sostava)', *TODRL*, 51 (1999), pp. 91–106.

[5] Allusions to blessings and striking the board can be found in a collection of writings about monastic life compiled at the Monastery of the Caves in the thirteenth century. See *The Paterik of the Kievan Caves Monastery*, ed. Muriel Heppel (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 57–61. On the textual history of the *Paterik*, see D. I. Abramovich, *Issedovanie o Kievo-Pecherskom paterike kak istoriko-literaturnom pamiatnike* (St Petersburg, 1902).

[6] *Paterik*, pp. 29, 41–44, 55–57, 61.

[7] *TAS*, ed. A. M. Pentkovskii (Moscow, 2001), p. 169.

[8] For more on the traditions of eastern monasticism, see J. McGuckin, 'Monasticism and Monasteries', in R. Cormack, J. F. Haldon, and E. Jeffreys (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 611–20.

[9] The phrase should not be confused with the Greek monastic practice of *adelphopoiesis*, or 'brother-making'. See C. Rapp, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium* (Oxford, 2016).

[10] *TAS*, p. 387.

[11] *Paterik,* p. 113.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CAVES

The life in common was something of a late development at the Kiev Caves, however. Both the *Paterik* and the *Rus Primary Chronicle* preserve a nearly identical story about the founding of the monastery, which indicates that it originated not as a communal institution, but as one man's refuge from the outside world.[12] According to these sources, the grounds were first inhabited by the hermit Antonii, a native of Rus, who returned to his homeland after a period of time on the 'Holy Mountain', or Mount Athos, the ancient centre of Byzantine monasticism situated on a remote peninsula in the north-west corner of the Aegean Sea.[13] Returning to Kiev in the mid-eleventh century, Antonii visited several local monasteries but was apparently unimpressed.[14] The veteran monk therefore retreated to a hill above the Dnieper and dug himself a cave, where 'he began to pray to God with tears . . . giving himself no rest day or night'. Reports of his pious exploits soon spread across the countryside. 'He became famous, like the great Anthony . . . and was renowned throughout the land of Rus.'[15] Princes visited the cave to ask for his blessing. Commoners came to request the hermit's prayers. Eventually, no less than a dozen disciples gathered around him, dug caves of their own, and asked to receive the tonsure. The anchorite acquiesced and a subterranean monastery, complete with a small chapel and monastic cells, was excavated from the hillside.

Yet Antonii was a recluse by nature, not a hegumen, and he yearned to return to the solitary life. He appointed the monk Varlaam to take his place as superior and withdrew into seclusion once more. His retreat had little effect on the monastery's growth, however, and the underground dwelling was soon filled to overflowing. The monks subsequently petitioned Prince Iziaslav, the grandson of Iaroslav the Wise, to give them the land surrounding the caves. The prince granted their wish and a new above-ground complex was constructed. 'The brethren laid the foundations of a large church and monastery, surrounded it with a fence, built many cells, erected a church, and adorned it with icons.' Characteristically, the chronicler was not afraid to state the obvious: 'And henceforth it began to be called the Caves Monastery, because the

12 See 'Account of Why the Caves Monastery is So Called' ('Сказание чего ради прозвася Печерский монастырь'), in PVL… in *PVL*, 155, 29–160, 26 and the *Paterik,* pp. 18–23.

13 On the monastic life at Mount Athos, see Richard P. H. Greenfield and Alice-Mary Talbot (eds.), *Holy Men of Mount Athos* (Cambridge, MA, 2016).

14 By one scholar's reckoning, at least seventy monasteries had been founded before the Mongol invasions of 1238–40. See E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (Moscow, 1904), vol. I, pp. 746–76.

15 *PVL*, 156, 30–31, 157, 10.

monks first lived in a cave.'[16] A short time later, at the behest of Prince Iziaslav, Varlaam was transferred to the nearby monastery of Saint Demetrios. The man selected to replace him was Feodosii, an 'obedient, meek, and humble' monk, who years earlier had fled from an overbearing mother and sought out Antonii's spiritual guidance.[17]

The monastery flourished under the new hegumen's direction. Some one hundred monks came to the complex and committed themselves to imitating 'the life of the angels': the life of unceasing praise and glorification of God.[18] This form of existence was perhaps natural to the heavenly hosts, but for those on earth it required a considerable degree of discipline and bureaucratic organization. In an effort to regulate his growing flock, Feodosii 'began to seek a monastic *ustav*', or rule.[19] He consulted with a monk from the Imperial City who had travelled to Kiev in the company of the metropolitan. His name was Michael and he was a product of the Monastery of Stoudios, the famed cenobitic institution near the Sea of Marmara, on the outskirts of Constantinople. Feodosii apparently liked what he heard from the Byzantine monk, since he subsequently 'sent one of the brethren to Constantinople ... to have the entire rule of the Stoudios Monastery copied and brought back'. Once this order had been fulfilled, 'Feodosii ordered it to be read out before the brethren, and henceforth he began to do everything in his monastery according to the rule of the holy Stoudite house.'[20]

THE TYPICON OF PATRIARCH ALEXIS THE STOUDITE

Modern liturgists generally accept this picture of events, though they insist on an important correction. A close analysis of the surviving rubrics reveals that the typicon brought to the Monastery of the Caves was not from the 'holy Stoudite house' or at least not directly. The rule instituted by Feodosii was in fact imported from a different imperial monastery, that of the Dormition of the Theotokos, founded by Patriarch Alexis the Stoudite in the second quarter of the eleventh century in Constantinople. As his sobriquet implies, Alexis was formerly a monk of the Monastery of Stoudios, where he had risen through the ranks and eventually been named hegumen. He continued in that role until the year 1025, when emperor Basil II 'the Bulgar Slayer' elevated him to the patriarchal throne. Alexis wore the mitre and carried the crosier for nearly

[16] *PVL*, 159, 3–7. [17] *Ibid.* [18] *Paterik*, pp. 18, 23. [19] *PVL,* 160, 2–3.

[20] *Paterik*, p. 45. On the influence of this typicon in Byzantium, see D. Krausmuller and O. Grinchenko, 'The Tenth-Century Stoudios-Typicon and its Impact on Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Byzantine Monasticism', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 63 (2013), pp. 153–75.

a decade before founding his own monastic community, yet he remained a Stoudite at heart. The liturgical calendar and disciplinary chapters preserved in his typicon reproduce in precise detail the practices he learned as a younger man. The chroniclers in Kiev were therefore justified in tracing their traditions back to the great Stoudios Monastery. They were simply unaware, it seems, that their rule was copied from a later redaction and not from the Stoudite originals.[21]

The monks of the Caves interpreted their new *ustav* rather literally. For just as Alexis had followed the customs of the Stoudites to the letter, so the brethren in Kiev faithfully followed the customs of Alexis. The main church at the patriarch's monastery, for instance, was dedicated to the feast of the Dormition, and the main church at the Monastery of the Caves was also dedicated to the feast of the falling asleep of the Mother of God. A church was traditionally consecrated on the feast day of its patron saint, and thus the patriarch blessed his new church on 14 August 1034, during the pre-feast of the Dormition. On that very day, fifty-five years later, Metropolitan Ioann of Kiev consecrated a church of the same name while celebrating the same pre-feast.[22] Two years passed and a second church was built at the Caves, this time in honour of Saint John the Forerunner, the name by which the Baptist is known in the Christian east. Once more the designation was not a matter of chance. The brethren followed the instructions written down in the rule of Alexis, just as they had with the earlier church. Reading through the typicon, they found a feast day commemorating the restoration of a church dedicated to the Forerunner of the Lord, and they subsequently built a church for the same saint at their own monastery.[23]

The similarities do not end there. Ovens were lit in identical fashion at both monasteries. Food was prepared and blessed in the same manner. Meals at *trapeza* were served alike. Monks were divided into identical ranks. Novices were awarded monastic garments at similar stages. The requirements for confession to the hegumen were closely related.[24] The practices in Alexis' rule were so familiar, in fact, that when the chroniclers described its implementation under Feodosii, they did so using the language of the typicon itself:

И обрѣтъ у него, исписа, и устави въ манастыри своемь, како пѣти пѣниꙗ манастырьскаꙗ, и поклонъ како дьржати, и чьтениꙗ почитати, и стоꙗние въ цьркъви, и вьсь рꙗдъ цьркъвьныи, на трꙗпезѣ сѣдание, и чьто ꙗсти въ кыꙗ дьни, вьсе съ уставлениемь.[25]

[21] *TAS*, pp. 5–6, 42–49, 152–62. [22] *Ibid*., pp. 24, 171. [23] *Ibid*., p. 172.
[24] *Ibid*., pp. 24–27, 172–77. Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, pp. 222–23, 310–27, 503–20, 560–86, 603–19.
[25] *PVL*, 160, 7–12.

Having found and copied [the typicon] from him, he established in his own monastery how to sing the monastic offices, how to make prostrations, how to arrange the readings; where one should stand in church and all the rules of behaviour in church, where one should sit at trapeza; and what should be eaten on which days. All were arranged according to the rule.

As several liturgists have pointed out, this description is similar to the headings given in the patriarch's *ustav*.[26] At the outset of his disciplinary commandments, for example, one finds 'a rule concerning food and what a monk should eat . . . and how to behave in church'.[27] A little later, the patriarch provided detailed instructions on a wide variety of liturgical matters, with titles such as 'How a Monk Should Enter Church', 'How a Monk Should Stand with Attention at Divine Services', and 'How One Should Sing the Hours'.[28] The description in the chronicle further calls to mind the opening lines of the typicon:

Синаксарь иже есть оуставъ. Оуставленымъ имѣѩ всѣм временемь о церковнѣмь слоужении и о п(с)лтрнѣмь пѣтии и о каноунѣхъ и въ которыѩ дьни праздноуимъ от общаго дѣланиѩ и въ которыѩ памѧти с҃тымъ творити праздника ради бывающихъ . . .[29]

The Synaxarion, or *ustav*. A rule containing all seasons and church services, and how to sing the psalter and canons, and which days are celebrated differently from the usual manner, and on which feast days the memory of saints is celebrated . . .

These were perhaps the very first words that the clergymen of the Caves encountered before each service, as they opened the rule and perused its directives. Thus, it was only natural that they chose similar words to describe the rule in the chronicle text. The clerics depended on this book to tell them what to pray, what to sing, what to read, and what to wear, at every major service, in every season of the liturgical year. The *ustav* was a pervasive part of their everyday lives, and, as we shall see, its influence extended well beyond the walls of the church.

DECODING THE TYPICON

There can therefore be little doubt that it was this volume, the 'Typicon of Patriarch Alexis the Stoudite', that the clerics now consulted prior to the start of vespers, as the sacristan struck the board and the brethren

[26] P. S. Kazanskii, *Nachalo monashestva v Rossii* (Moscow, 1850), pp. 587–88. A. A. Dmitrievskii, *Tserkovnyi ustav (Tipik), ego obrazovanie i sud'ba v Grecheskoi i Russkoi Tserkvi* (Moscow, 1888), p. 503. B. A. Chagovets, *Prepodobnyi Feodosii Pecherskii, ego zhizn' i sochineniia* (Kiev, 1901), p. 42. M. Lisitsyn, *Pervonachal'nyi slaviano-russkii Tipikon* (St Petersburg, 1911), p. 175.

[27] *TAS*, p. 368. [28] *Ibid.*, pp. 399–402. [29] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

walked to church. The priest-monk (*иеромонах*) and heirodeacon (*иеродиакон*) huddled together inside the sanctuary (*олтарь*), or perhaps in the nearby sacristy (*сосудохранилица*), and prepared to serve the evening rite. They were probably joined there as well by the reader (*чтец*), the minor cleric responsible for chanting key parts of the service as a soloist, and perhaps by one of the 'singers' (*певцы*). It is unclear whether this latter figure also conducted the choir and prepared the relevant hymn books, as cantors in the western tradition often did, or whether that responsibility fell to the sacristan or one of his assistants, the so-called 'lamp-lighters' (*кандиловжигатель*), who at that moment were tending to the incense or re-filling oil lamps in the nave.[30]

The celebrants opened the typicon and turned to the Synaxarion (*синаксарь*). This was the part of the rule listing the fixed calendar of saints: the commemorations that took place on the same date annually, without exception. Here they found feasts dedicated to holy figures, such as apostles, prophets, and martyrs, or else to outstanding events in the history of salvation, such as the birth of the Virgin Mary, the discovery of a long-lost relic, or a miraculous military victory. The ceremonies were divided into twelve monthly segments, starting with the first of September and continuing through to the last day of August. A typical entry listed the directions for vespers, matins, and divine liturgy, always in that order. Instructions for the evening service often looked something like this:

М(с)цѧ того(ж) • въ • к҃а • памѧ(т) с҃тою ц(с)рю • костѧ/нтина • и елены • ве(ч) • на г҃и възъвахъ • / оуставлѧють сти(х)въ • ѕ҃ • и поють по дво/ици сті(х)ры • г҃ • гла(с) • д҃ • по(д) • Дасть знамен • / на сла(в) • и ны(н) • б(о) • про(к) • на сти(х)внѣ • сті(х)ры • / • г҃ • въ октаи(ц) • и с҃тою гла(с) • и҃ • О прѣславь/ное чюдо • и б(о) • тре(п) • не поеть (с) • нъ диа/кон • рекшю • прѣмоудро(с) • бывае(т) • ѿпоуще(н).[31]

Of the same month • on • 21 • in memory of the holy emperors • Constantine • and Helena • Ves[pers] • at Lord I have cried • [they] establish versicles • 6 • and sing twice the stichera • 3 • tone • 4 • pod[oben] • You have given a sign • at glor[y] • and now • theo[tokion] • prok[eimenon] • at aposticha • stichera • 3 • in the Octoechos • and [for the] saints tone • 8 • O glorious wonder • and bo[gorodichen] • trop[arion] • is not sung • but the deacon • having said • wisdom • there is • a dismissal.

[30] A description of various ecclesiastical roles may be found in *TAS*, pp. 386–87, 408. On the initiation procedures for minor clerics in medieval Rus, see Golubinskii, *Istorii russkoi tserkvi*, vol. II, pp. 532–34. On the personnel at early medieval Byzantine cenobitic monasteries, see Anderson and Parenti, *A Byzantine Monastic Office,* pp. 22–24; I. I. Sokolov, *Sostoianie monashestva v Vizantiiskoi Tserkvi s serediny IX do nachala XIII veka (842–1204)* (St Petersburg, 2003), pp. 326–27.

[31] *TAS*, p. 344.

As this brief example indicates, the information in the typicon was sparse and highly specialized. It comprised a string of abbreviations and symbols, mostly referring to various genres of chants and hymns. The message was all but indecipherable to the untrained, yet when the clerics of the Caves consulted it, they quickly recognized what they needed to do.

In this case, they saw that it was 21 May and the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena. The rubrics first called for the singing of three stichera (*стихира*), short hymns devoted to the theme of the feast. They were to be sung twice each, following the chanting of 'Lord, I have cried' ('Господи воззвах'), a composite of psalms repeated every evening prior to the clergy's procession into the altar. For this feast, however, the entry specified more than just the number of hymns. It also indicated the manner in which they should be performed. Byzantine church music was based on a system of eight modes, or tones (*глас*), and the entry called for the stichera to be sung in the fourth tone, after the fashion of another hymn with the incipit, 'You have given a sign' ('Дасть знамен').[32] Following these instructions, the clergy found the familiar abbreviation for the exclamation, 'Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages' (*слава и ныне*). The typicon then directed them to sing a theotokion (*богородичен*) in honour of the Mother of God, after which they were told to chant the prokeimenon (*прокимен*), a verse taken from the psalms or biblical canticles and repeated three times. Next, the clerics were instructed to perform three aposticha (*стиховные стихиры*): two from the Octoechos (*Октоих*) and one for the saints, sung in the eighth tone, to the melody of 'O Glorious Wonder'.[33] Finally, the passage dictated the singing of an additional theotokion and also noted that the troparion of the feast (*тропарь)* should not be performed in its normal place, following the deacon's intonation of 'Wisdom!' The entry concluded with a brief note indicating that a dismissal should be said.[34]

The clerics were able to make sense of this shorthand because they knew the 'ordinary' of the office by heart. Every day, regardless of the feast or season, these men attended a cycle of services closely connected with the rising and setting of the sun. The 'propers' of a feast – the

[32] The musical culture of early Rus is discussed in T. F. Vladyshevskaia, 'Tipografskii Ustav i muzykal'naia kul'tura Drevnei Rusi XI–XII vekov', in B. V. Uspenskii (ed.), *Tipografskii ustav: ustav s kondakarem kontsa XI–nachala XII veka* (Moscow, 2006), vol. III, pp. 111–204. For an introduction to Byzantine music, see Alexander Lingas, 'Music', in R. Cormack, J. F. Haldon, and E. Jeffreys (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 915–38.

[33] On the number of stikhera sung at Vespers in early Rus, see O. A. Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh sv. Klimenta arkhiepiskopa Okhridskogo* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 333–40.

[34] A glossary of twelfth-century liturgical terms can be found in D. M. Petras, *The Typicon of Patriarch Alexis the Studite: Novgorod-St Sophia, 1136* (Cleveland, 1991), pp. 113–36.

hymns, canons, and scripture readings – changed every twenty-four hours, but the core structure of daily worship did not. The basic skeleton of the services remained invariable, whether the calendar showed Christmas or Ascension or a simple feria for an obscure Roman martyr. Vespers was always evensong, prayer at sundown. Matins was always the early morning service, lauds to God at dawn. The divine liturgy always followed the third and sixth hours. With very few exceptions, such as high holy days like Easter, these services occurred at the same time, followed the same unchanging order, and comprised the same primary components. Entries in the typicon were therefore recorded in a kind of code because they were intended for an audience for whom such things were already second nature. Priest-monks, deacons, and readers were extremely familiar with the *ordo* of the daily office, and so they instantly understood where variable elements like stichera or troparia should be performed.[35]

Perhaps just as importantly, they also knew where to find these materials. The typicon was merely a guidebook, not a comprehensive script. It did not provide the texts for the prayers said in the sanctuary, or the Scriptures proclaimed in the nave, or the hymns sung on the kliros. These pieces were contained in a multitude of other church books, which also needed to be readied before the start of the service: the Euchologion, Horologion, Menaion, Octoechos, Irmologion, Kondakariia, Sticherarion, Evangelium, Apostol, and Psalter, among others. The celebrants began with the *ustav*, however, because this was the book that regulated all the rest. It told them which hymns to sing from the Menaion, which kathisma to read from the Psalter, which irmos to chant from the Irmologion, which pericopes to read from the Gospel lectionary, and so on. Thus, after learning these details from the *ustav*, the clergymen next turned to arranging the many other church books still required for the performance of that evening's rite.

DRESSING, BOWING, KISSING, CROSSING

Meanwhile, on the other side of the iconostasis, the brethren of the monastery were also preparing for the start of the service. They entered through the main doors of the church into the narthex (*притвор*) and began to enact a number of private, informal entrance rituals. One by one, the monks turned to the east and faced the royal doors (*царские врата*), the central gates of the iconostasis, located directly in front of the

35 R. Taft, 'Mount Athos', pp. 179–94.

altar.[36] Here their gaze probably fell upon a large icon of Christ, illuminated by candlelight to the right of the doors, and then perhaps upon the monastery's prized wonder-working icon of the Mother of God (*наместная икона*), which was said to have been donated by the Virgin herself.[37] In reverence to the holiness of the place, the brethren performed a full prostration and 'piously made the sign of the cross over their bodies with their fingers'.[38] Returning to their feet, they continued forward into the nave, the main body of the church, where they probably began to venerate the relics and mosaic icons lining the stone walls.[39] They did so by approaching the holy pictures or bones, bowing to the ground and crossing themselves, and then kissing the sacred objects in a traditional spot, such as the hands or feet.[40] Once these gestures were complete, the monks took up their appointed positions in the church, from where they made one final prostration in the direction of their spiritual supervisor, the hegumen.[41]

Four ranks of monks stood praying in the nave. The lowliest of these were newly admitted members who had arrived at the monastery less than a year ago, and who still dressed in laymen's clothes. They were joined by novices in traditional monastic attire who had been tested in the spiritual life for up to three years, though they had yet to take vows or receive the tonsure. Alongside them, fingering their prayer rope or perhaps whispering a psalm, stood the tonsured monks: those who had been accepted into the 'little schema' (*малая схима*) and the more veteran brothers, far fewer in number, who had been inducted into the 'great angelic schema' (*великая ангельская схима*).[42] These men wore long beards and donned the full monastic habit. It consisted of a chiton (*хитон)*, an ankle-length, sleeveless linen garment tied at the waist with a leather belt. Beneath the chiton the monks wore a hair shirt (*власяница*) and atop it an *analav* (*аналав*), a four-cornered rectangular cloth wrapped about the upper body in the shape of a cross. The *analav* was mostly obscured, however, by the long, full capes that the brethren draped across their shoulders and fastened at the collar. These were known as mantles (*мантия*), and they

[36] A description of the iconostasis in medieval Rus may be found in Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, vol. I, pp. 200–29. On church building in the period, see P. A. Rappaport, *Building the Churches of Kievan Russia* (New York, 1995).

[37] *Paterik*, p. 7. Instructions for placing candles in front of icons are preserved in *TAS*, pp. 419–20. See also John Thomas and Angela Constantinides (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents* (Washington DC, 2000), vol. I, pp. 484, 742, 753.

[38] *TAS*, p. 402.

[39] In an unusual twist, relics in the main church at the Caves were apparently placed under the walls of the church and the images of the saints depicted above them. See the *Paterik*, p. 9.

[40] Evidence for this sort of icon veneration is found in various places of the *Paterik*, see pp. 15, 93, 192, 199, 212.

[41] *TAS*, p. 402. [42] Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, pp. 670–75.

complemented the small, round, veiled caps, or *kukul'* (*кукуль*), with which the monks covered their heads. The exact design and dimensions of the ensemble could vary, but one aspect remained unchanged. A monk's wardrobe was always and entirely black. The colour was so ubiquitous, in fact, that in Byzantium and Rus, monks came to be called after the shade of their ecclesiastical uniform. They were known simply as the 'black ones' (*чернец* or *черноризец*), a term that is still used to refer to monastics in modern Russian and Ukrainian.[43]

The austerity of the monastic habit stood in stark contrast to the ornate vestments worn by the celebrants in the altar.[44] Their elaborately embroidered white garments shimmered amidst the burning incense and candlelight, as they moved about the sanctuary and made a few final preparations. The officiating priest dressed in a *podriznik* (*подризник*), a long gown reaching to the floor and girded with a belt, similar to the western alb. Around his neck, falling down over the chest nearly to the ankles, was a strip of fabric called the ephitrachelion (*епитрахиль*), or stole. It hung beneath the outermost liturgical vestment, the chasuble or phelonion (*фелонь*), a round, highly decorative garment with a hole cut in the middle for the head, rather like a poncho. A pectoral cross (*энколпион*), depicting the Crucifixion and perhaps containing a precious relic, rested upon the priest's bosom and completed the picture.[45] The deacon standing nearby was outfitted similarly. He wore a sticharion (*стихарь*), a floor-length silk garment that was all but indistinguishable from the priestly *podriznik*. Unlike the chief celebrant, however, he draped a long, thin ribbon known as an orarion (*орарь*) diagonally across his shoulders and torso.

This garment served more than merely a sartorial purpose. It also served to remind the deacon of his lofty calling. Turning the ribbon over in his hands, he found stitched upon it the song of the angels: 'Holy, Holy, Holy'.[46] Here was the exultant, ecstatic cry of the seraphim and cherubim, as they flew before the throne of God and beheld his glory. Here, embroidered on a piece of clothing, was the reason for all of the prayers, bows, and kisses. The celebrants were now ready to begin the liturgical ascent, to lead their community into a different spiritual dimension, into a kingdom not of this world. The hour had come for the brethren of the Caves to worship their thrice-holy God.

[43] *Ibid*., p. 676–88. See also Karel C. Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress in the Medieval Near East* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 107–29.

[44] Clerical attire is described in *TAS*, pp. 389–90.

[45] Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, pp. 252–70.

[46] *Ibid*., p. 261.

VESPERS

The semantron had fallen silent. Oil lamps burned in front of the holy images and clouds of incense billowed from behind the royal doors. The brethren stood quietly in the nave, facing the sanctuary, awaiting the opening blessing. A lamp-lighter stoked the coals in the censer, as the celebrants solemnly assumed their traditional positions around the altar. Directly before them on the holy table stood a large cross, possibly of silver or gold, beneath which flickered the seven candles of a candelabra. A small, highly ornate tabernacle was also placed there, alongside a Gospel lectionary encased in precious metals.[47] The priest-monk raised his hands towards the heavens and loudly pronounced the introductory prayer: 'Blessed is the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages.' The reader responded, 'Amen', and continued with the prayer of invocation, 'O Heavenly King'.[48] Next came the nightly chanting of Psalm 103, a lengthy meditation on the power of God and the majesty of his Creation. Reading from the Horologion (*Часослов*), the reader rhythmically chanted of an omnipotent deity, 'clothed in honour and majesty', who 'laid the foundations of the earth' and gave to all 'their food in due season'.[49]

The ancient verses filled the church, echoing across the stone walls and mosaic floors, yet the priest in the sanctuary paid them little heed. He was engaged with a different matter, requiring a different set of prayers and a different church book. As the reader chanted the psalm, the priest opened the Euchologion (*Евхологий* or *Служебник*), the text containing the prayers and litanies said by the officiating clergy at every service of the daily cycle, as well as during the rites of baptism, chrismation, marriage, burial, and confession.[50] Hidden behind the veil of the iconostasis, he proceeded to recite a series of 'secret' prayers asking for God's mercy, guidance, and intercession. In the first prayer, for instance, he prayed silently or in a low voice:

г҃и • шедрыи • и мл(с)твыи • долготьрпѣливъ • ї многомл(с)твъ внуши млт҃ву • нашю • ї вънми • гл(с)а молению нашего • створи с нами знамение въ бл҃го • настави ны на путь твоï • да ходимъ въ ïстинѣ твоеï • възвесели • ср҃да • наша ꙗко да боꙗтисѧ имени твоего ст҃го • зане великъ еси ты творѧи чюдесѧ • ты еси б҃ъ единъ • ï н(с)ѣ подобиа тебе

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 166–74.
[48] M. Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni v drevnerusskikh sluzhebnikakh studiiskoi epokhi', *BT*, 43–44 (2012), p. 462.
[49] Psalm 103:5, 27. Psalm 104 in the western Christian tradition.
[50] T. I. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v slavianskoi traditsii (po sluzhebnikam XI–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 2015), pp. 10–11, 34–35.

въ б҃зѣхъ г҃и • силныи мл(с)тью • и бл҃гыи крѣпостию • помагати и сп(са)ти • всѧ уповающаю на ї́мѧ с҃тое твое.[51]

O Lord, generous and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy, give ear to our prayer and attend to the voice of our supplication. Work in us a sign for good. Guide us in your way, that we may walk in your truth. Make glad our hearts, that we may fear your holy name. For you are great and work wonders, you alone are God, and there is none like you among the gods. O Lord, strong in mercy and good in might, help and save all who hope in your holy name.

Petitions of this kind were an important part of the daily office. The chief celebrant recited as many as nine such prayers at vespers, twelve at matins, and no fewer than seventeen at divine liturgy.[52] These prayers were repeated every day, no matter the feast or season, and they tended to recapitulate the main theme of each service. As a result, the clergy in the altar were privy to an additional set of sacred narratives, to an additional telling of the core mythos, which went unseen and unheard by the faithful in the nave.

The priest finished the secret prayers and the reader finished the psalm. The deacon emerged from the sanctuary and assumed his customary position at the centre of the ambo, in front of the royal doors. Turning his back to the congregation, he faced the altar and intoned the litany of peace (*мирная ектения*), a series of eleven entreaties directed at the Lord and punctuated with the refrain, 'Lord, have mercy.'[53] The opening petitions focused on spiritual blessings. The deacon prayed 'for the peace from above and the salvation of our souls', 'for the peace of the whole world and the welfare of the holy churches of God'. He remembered the ecclesiastical establishment, starting with the ruling archbishop, whom he prayed for by name, followed by 'the most honourable priesthood and diaconate in Christ' and 'all the clergy and people'. Next to be commemorated were the political rulers of the day. The deacon supplicated 'for our right-believing and God-protected prince, [name], and for all of his boyars and for all of his warriors'. He further implored God to help the prince and enable him to 'trample all of his enemies and adversaries under his feet'. The entreaties soon pivoted from the powerful to the powerless. The deacon prayed 'for those sailing at sea and travelling, for the sick and the suffering, for prisoners and their salvation'. He asked for deliverance 'from every affliction, wrath, misfortune, and

[51] *Sluzhebnik,* Sof. 518, ll. 1–5, ed. T. I. Afanas'eva, E. V. Krushel'nitskaia, O. V. Motygin, and A. S. Slutskii, www.byzantinorossica.org.ru/sof-catalog/518/518_0.html (accessed December 2017).

[52] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, pp. 34–35. Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', pp. 450–55.

[53] Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', pp. 459–60.

necessity'. Finally, bowing in the direction of a large icon of Mary to the left of the royal doors, he repeated the standard hortatory ending: 'Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and all our lives unto Christ our God.'[54]

Vespers had barely begun. Only a single psalm, a single litany, and a few priestly prayers had been said. Yet a crucial characteristic of East Roman liturgy was already apparent: the tendency to unite multiple narratives from multiple periods of sacred history in a single liturgical moment. Just now, the reader had chanted the sacred verses of David while the priest prayed a late antique Byzantine prayer and the deacon implored Jesus Christ on behalf of the contemporary political regime. These were not separate and distinct entities confined to their respective eras and recited one at a time. Rather, the entire history of salvation unfolded simultaneously during the celebration of the rite. The sacred stories of the Israelites, the early church, and the Christian Roman empire blended together into a single, seamless liturgical past.

Perhaps nowhere was this better exemplified than during the singing of 'Lord, I Have Cried', a collection of chants that took place shortly after the opening litany and the nightly *kathisma* reading from the Psalter. During this segment, the reader and the choir took turns performing verses and festal stichera antiphonally. As the deacon censed the sanctuary, the choir began to sing the words of psalm 140: 'Lord, I have cried unto thee, hear me. Hear me, O Lord . . . Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.' The reader responded with selected verses from psalms 141, 129, and 116, in between which the choir chanted the appointed stichera from one of two books, the Menaion (*Минея*) or Sticherarion (*Стихирарь*).[55] Thus, to continue using the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena as an example, once the reader had finished the verse, 'If you should mark iniquities, O Lord: O Lord, who shall stand? For with you there is forgiveness', the choir answered with the first sticherion of the feast, chanted in the fourth tone:

Ороужие крепъко • цьсареви нашемоу дасть • крьстъ твои чьстьныи • имьже цьсарьствова • на земли правьдьно • сиѩвъ вѣрою • цьсарьства небесьнааго съподобисѩ милосьрдьемь си • съ нимиже ти чловѣколюбьное • съмотрение славимъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе доушамъ наш.[56]

[54] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, pp. 296–97.
[55] Instructions for the chanting of verses during 'Lord, I have cried' are found in *TAS*, p. 407.
[56] Sin. 166, 124.1.

You gave a mighty weapon to our emperor Constantine, your precious cross, by which he reigned on earth righteously, shone forth in faith, and has been vouchsafed the kingdom of heaven by your loving-kindness. Wherefore, we glorify your loving dispensation, O merciful Jesus, the saviour of our souls.

The reader continued with the next verse, 'For your name's sake have I waited patiently for you, O Lord; my soul has waited patiently for your word, my soul has hoped in the Lord', and the choir responded with the second sticherion:

Дасть чловѣколюбьче • богочьстивоу оумȣ ти оугодьникȣ • прѣмудрость соломоню • давыдовоу кротость • апостольское правовѣрие • ꙗко цьсарь цьсаремъ • и господь господьствоующиимъ • съ нимьже ти милосьрденое • съмотрение славимъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе д[ушамъ наш].[57]

You gave to your pious favorite, O Lover of mankind, the wisdom of Solomon, the meekness of David, and the Orthodoxy of the apostles, for you are the king of kings and Lord of lords. With him, we glorify your loving dispensation, O merciful Jesus, the saviour of our souls.

The reader chanted a third verse, 'From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord', and the choir followed with the third sticherion, again invoking the emperor Constantine:

Пьрвыи покореба • пьрфоуроу приснопамѧть цесарю • волею хрьста ты познавъ • бога же и цьсарѧ • вьсѣхъ благодѣтелю • вьсѧкомоу началоу • и власти прѣбольшааго • тѣмь ти хрьстолюбьче • цьсарѣство оуправивъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе доушам[ъ наш].[58]

You were the first to submit the royal purple willingly to Christ, O ever-memorable emperor. You thereby came to know God, the emperor of all, benefactor of every beginning, and greatest power. Wherefore, you were granted an empire, O Christ-lover, by merciful Jesus, the saviour of our souls.

The reader went on to chant an additional three verses, and the choir repeated each hymn once more, as instructed in the typicon. He then chanted the standard doxology to the Trinity, and the choir finished with a hymn devoted to the Mother of God, in the appropriate tone of the week. Thus, should the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena have fallen on a Sunday during the weekly cycle of the first tone, the choir would have sung:

[57] *Ibid.*, 124.1. [58] *Ibid.*, 124.2.

Гаврилоу провѣщавъшю • къ дѣвѣ и радость съ гласъмь въплъщрааше сѧ • вьсѣхъ владыка • въ тебѣ свѧтѣмь ковьчезѣ • ꙗкоже рече правьдьныи давыдъ • ꙗви сѧ пространѣиши небесъ • поношьшиꙗ зижителѧ своего • слава въсельшюоумоу сѧ въ тѧ • слава прошьдъшюоумоу ис тебе • слава свобожьшюоумоу ны рожьствъмь своимь.[59]

When Gabriel announced the joy to the virgin, at that sound the master of all became incarnate within you, the holy tabernacle. You were shown to be more spacious than the heavens, as the righteous David said, having borne your creator. Glory to him who made his abode within you! Glory to him who came forth from you! Glory to him who has set us free by your birth-giving!

These four stichera represented only a tiny fraction of the thousands and thousands of hymns chanted over the course of the liturgical year. Yet one can already distinguish in them the lineaments of an independent narrative world, of a distinctively *Byzantine* liturgical past. In these brief lines, the exploits of a fourth-century Roman emperor are interwoven with the history of Israel and the founding myths of the New Testament church. Constantine is presented as the direct successor to David, Solomon, and the apostles. He is granted an empire by Christ himself and awarded the 'mighty weapon' of the cross. All the while, the sacred poetry of the psalter frames and intersects the Roman narrative. David prophesies, Christ saves, the Virgin conceives, the apostles preach, and Constantine conquers: all this in the service of the same God, who gradually reveals and executes his divine plan, in age after age, from the courts of Solomon, to the Crucifixion, to the conversion of the Roman Empire.

Vespers continued with the evening entrance ritual. The clergy exited the altar and gathered in the nave. From there the deacon intoned the *vozglas*, 'Wisdom, attend!', and the celebrants paraded into the altar, through the open royal doors, as the priest recited yet another secret prayer. Then commenced the singing of perhaps the most celebrated and ancient of evening hymns, the *Phos Hilarion* (*Свете тихий*), from the Horologion:

Свѣ(те) ти(хыи) с҃тыѧ славы • безсм҃рьтнаго б҃а нб(с)наго • ст҃то бл҃женнаго і҃у х҃а с҃на б҃жїа • прише(д)шаго на запа(д)а с҃лньцоу • видѣвъше свѣ(т) вечерьнїи • поемь ѡꙵц҃а с҃на и с҃тго д҃ха б҃а • достоинь еси на всѧ врѣмена • пѣть быти гл҃сы прѣпо(д)бнъıми • с҃не б҃жїа животь даѧи мироу • тѣмже мирь тѧ славить.[60]

[59] *Tipografskii ustav: Ustav s kondakarem kontsa XI–nachala XII veka*, ed. B. A. Uspenskii (Moscow, 2006), vol. II, pp. 219–20.

[60] *Krakovskii Chasoslov 1491 g.*, p. 44, www.irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/ulib/item/UKR0007778 (accessed December 2017). Earlier versions of the hymn may be found in RNB Q.p.I. 67 and Sof. 522, 523, 524.

O gladsome light of the holy glory of the immortal father, heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ, Son of God. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun and behold the light of evening, we praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For meet it is at all times to worship you with voices of praise, O Son of God and giver of life. Wherefore, all the world glorifies you.

The officiating priest carried on with tidings of peace. Turning around towards the brethren, he blessed them and said, 'Peace be with you all.' The choir and the people answered, 'And with your spirit', and the deacon once more pronounced the *vozglas*, 'Wisdom!'[61] The voice of the reader was the next to be heard, announcing the evening prokeimenon. This was followed by two more sets of secret prayers and litanies. During the litany of fervent supplication (*сугубая ектения*) – so-called because the choir answered with three consecutive cries of 'Lord, have mercy'– the deacon prayed again for 'the pious and God-protected prince' and for his 'power, victory, peace, health, and salvation'.[62] In the second, shorter litany of supplication (*просительная ектения*), the deacon requested, among other things, 'a Christian ending to our lives, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good defence before the dread judgement seat of Christ'.[63] Once the litanies had been said, the celebrant recited the 'prayer of the bowing of heads' (*главопреклонная молитва*). He asked God to guard the faithful 'at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil, and from vain thoughts and evil imaginations'.[64]

At this point, the service moved once more from the concerns of the present to the memory of the sacred past. Another series of hymns, known as aposticha (*стиховные стихиры*), continued to intertwine the mythology of Christ and Constantine, of the early church and the Christian Roman empire. As noted earlier, the typicon stipulated the singing of three stichera: two in the tone of the week and one for the saints. But the choir could not simply turn the page and sing these hymns in proper order. For like the theotokion chanted at the conclusion of 'Lord, I have cried', the aposticha were not located in the Menaion or Sticherarion, alongside the other verses for Constantine and Helena. Rather, the singers were instructed to look in the Octoechos (*Октоих*), or 'book of the eight tones', the liturgical volume containing the hymnody for each day of the revolving eight-week cycle of musical melodies. These materials were housed in a different church book for the simple reason that they belonged to a different liturgical rotation. They were part of the weekly cycle, the series of commemorations repeated

[61] Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', p. 459.
[62] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, pp. 301–302. [63] *Ibid*., pp. 307–308.
[64] *Ibid*.

every seven days, independent of the feasts prescribed in the Synaxarion. Each Sunday of the year, for instance, was devoted to the Resurrection, every Monday to the angelic powers, every Tuesday to Saint John the Forerunner, and on down the line.[65] Depending on what day of the week a feast happened to fall, the choir turned to the Octoechos and chanted the hymns assigned there, in the appropriate tone. So, if we once again posit that 21 May coincided with a Sunday during the weekly cycle of the first tone, the choir would have sung:

Стр(с)тїю твоею хр(с)те • ѿ страстей свободихомсѧ • и воскр(с)нїемъ твоимъ из истлѣнїѧ избавихомсѧ • г(с)ди слава тебѣ.[66]

By your passion, O Christ, we have been set free from sufferings and by your resurrection we have been delivered from corruption. O Lord, glory to you.

The reader then chanted the appointed psalm verses from the Horologion, and the singers continued with the second sticherion from the Octoechos:

Да рад8етсѧ тварь нб҃са • да веселѧтсѧ р8ками • да восплещ8тъ ꙗзыцы съ веселїемъ • хр(с)тосъ бо сп҃съ нашъ на кр(с)тѣ пригаозди грѣхи нашѧ • и смерть оумертвивъ • животъ нам дарова • падшаго адама всероднаго воскр҃ивый • ꙗко чл҃въколюбецъ.[67]

Let Creation rejoice, let the heavens cheer, let the nations clap their hands for joy. For Christ our saviour has nailed our sins to the cross. And having slain death and raised up fallen Adam, the progenitor of all, he has granted us life, for he loves mankind.

These stichera were subject to constant change, contingent on the daily and weekly cycles, whereas the final sticherion in honour of the saints was probably not. It seems to have remained stable and was chanted in the eighth tone:

Радоуисѧ костѧнтине прѣмудре • правовериѧ источьникъ • напаѧꙗ вьсегда • сладъкыими водами • подъ сълньчьноую вьсю • радоуисѧ корени отъ негоже прозѧбе плодъ • питаꙗ цьркъвь хрьстовоу • рад8исѧ похвало коньцемъ • славьне крьстьꙗньскыимъ • цьсаремъ пьрвѣе • рад8исѧ радости • вьсѣмъ вѣрьныим.[68]

[65] Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh*, p. 11.

[66] *Okhtoikh, serich Osmoglasnik* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 25–26. The aposticha reflects the first printed version from 1491. For a list of the unpublished medieval manuscripts containing the hymn, see Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Oktoikh*, pp. 24–6. See also M. Zheltov and E. Bulaev, 'Stikhiry voskresnogo oktoikha v Drevnem Tropologii', *Khristianskoe chtenie*, 3 (2018), pp. 94–111.

[67] *Okhtoikh*, pp. 25–26.

[68] Sin. 166, 124.2.

Rejoice, O Constantine most wise, the source of right belief, ever watering all things under the sun with sweet waters! Rejoice, O root from which sprouted forth the fruit that nourishes the church of Christ! Rejoice, O boast of the ends [of the earth], first in glory among Christian emperors! Rejoice, O joy of all the faithful!

With the singing of these words, the vespers service began to draw to an end. The choir chanted the song of Saint Simeon the God-Receiver, 'O Lord, now let your servant depart in peace', followed by the Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer. The deacon cried out, 'Wisdom!', one last time, and the priest and the choir responded with a series of concluding declamations. Finally, the priest came out onto the ambo and pronounced the ancient dismissal prayer (*молитва отпустная*): 'May Christ our true God, who arose from the dead, through the intercessions of his most pure mother; of the holy, glorious and all-praised apostles; of Saints Constantine and Helena, whose memory we celebrate today; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the lover of mankind.'[69]

The dismissal was particularly instructive, since it encompassed in microcosm the sacred story that had been told at vespers and that would continue to unfold over the next twenty-four hours, as the celebration carried on through compline, midnight office, matins, hours, and divine liturgy. The clergy and brethren of the Caves had learned in prayer after prayer, and hymn after hymn, that God had saved the world and that the emperor of the Roman Empire and his mother had played a crucial role in this divine plan. They were therefore worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as Jesus and Mary, to be members of the same sacred past as the apostles, Joachim and Anna, and all the saints. The liturgical past was not something remote and completed, once and for all, but rather an open and ongoing narrative. The story of human salvation had not ended on the last page of the New Testament, just as it had not ended on the last page of the Torah. New feasts could be added to the Synaxarion. New hymns could be written in the Menaion. New icons could be painted on the walls. Constantine could appear beside Christ, and the Roman Empire could be saved like the Israelites of old. All it took was the saint-making, past-making technology of Christian liturgy. And we shall find, in the second half of this book, that this was a technology which could be installed in new lands and gradually bring forth new generations of sacred heroes.

[69] On the dismissal for vespers in early Rus, see Zheltov, 'Chiny vecherni i utreni', p. 463.

We should also keep in mind, moreover, that the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena was only one celebration among hundreds, one plot-line in a much grander narrative. The Byzantine liturgical past was ritually reconstructed morning, evening, and night, 365 days a year. It was not fully enunciated at a single service or in the hymnography of a single saint. Rather, it was indoctrinated steadily, feast by feast, saint by saint, over the course of the entire year. The immensity of the liturgical past, with its hundreds of services and thousands of hymns, therefore precludes comprehensive treatment. Any attempt to describe the continuous, round-the-clock, year-long ritual performance is doomed to be reductive and cursory. For every feast brought to the reader's attention, there are dozens and dozens that must remain unmentioned. For every hymn offered as an example, there are several thousand that must be ignored. There is simply no adequate way to convey twelve months of lived liturgical experience in a few paragraphs of academic prose.

In what follows, I shall therefore endeavour to recover the liturgical past by providing the contents of a few hymns, from a handful of Byzantine services. The selections are neither exhaustive, nor even particularly significant. A similar exercise could be conducted using any of the many, many other feasts of the liturgical year, which I have not the space to mention. If there is a bias in my choices, it is perhaps in favour of particularly Roman feasts, at the expense of more ancient celebrations such as Easter or Christmas. I assume my readers are familiar with the basic narratives of these festivals. They are perhaps less acquainted, however, with the expansive and uniquely Roman mythology that was broadcast at lesser-known feasts.

What stories did these more obscure services tell? How and when had they developed? Where, in other words, had the liturgical past come from and what was its purpose? These are the questions I shall seek to answer in the final pages of the chapter, as I take leave of the vespers service at the Caves monastery and turn once again to the broader role of liturgy in the medieval Mediterranean world.

THE BYZANTINE LITURGICAL PAST

The ritual past that came to Rus in the tenth and eleventh centuries was the product of nearly ten centuries of Christian myth-making. Before the midnight vigils and ecumenical councils, before even the Bible, Christianity was a storytelling community, a religion formulated as narrative discourse.[70] The stories told and retold concerned the life of

70 J. Metz, 'Kleine Apologie des Erzählens', *Concilium*, 9 (1973), pp. 334–42.

a supernatural hero, Jesus of Nazareth, and in primitive Christianity these stories were pluriform.[71] A multitude of Christianities flourished in the second century, and the version of the religion canonized in the New Testament represented only a particular form of Christian congregation that emerged by degrees from the second to fourth centuries.[72] During that time, the members of a centrist brand of Christianity were able to create the impression of a single, monolinear history of the church. They did so by carefully selecting and arranging anonymous and pseudonymous writings, which were attributed to revered figures at the beginning of Christian time. Thus, as the editors of the New Testament saw things, the history of salvation was foretold by the prophets of Israel and accomplished through the incarnation of the God-man, Jesus Christ. The 'good news' of his death and resurrection was subsequently spread throughout the Mediterranean world by the apostles, whose teachings continued to be guarded and passed down by their direct successors, the bishops. The problem with this charter, according to Burton Mack, was that 'it is neither an authentic account of Christian beginnings, nor an accurate rehearsal of the history of the empire church. Historians of religions would call it myth.'[73]

In the mid-fourth century, the emperor Constantine became the patron of this centrist church, and the particular myths believed and recited by the group became the canonical narratives for his new imperial religion. The conversion of the Roman *imperator* thus represented a critical turning point in the evolution of Christian worship.[74] Indeed, as Paul Bradshaw has noted, a marked contrast may be observed between the liturgical practices that came before Constantine and those that followed after him. Whereas early Christians had viewed themselves as strangers and sojourners, set against the world, in the fourth century the church began to emerge as a powerful Roman institution, one very much enmeshed in the affairs of men.[75] As a result, the liturgy gradually transformed from the esoteric exercise of a persecuted mystery cult into

[71] P. F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (New York, 1992), p. 63.

[72] P. Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, 1988), p. 7. B. L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco, 1995), p. 6.

[73] Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament?*, pp. 7–8.

[74] Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship,* p. 65.

[75] A. Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop* (Leiden, 1995). See also J. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 2000); J. Curran and G. D. Dunn (ed.), *The Bishop of Rome in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2016).

a lavishly funded *cultus publicus* designed to secure divine favour and ensure the well-being of the empire.[76]

It was also at this time that Christian ritual began to splinter into separate commemorations of historical events in the life of Christ.[77] The best example of such a 'historicizing' of Roman worship was the evolution of Easter and Holy Week.[78] The original Christian festival, Easter had originally commemorated the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ in a single annual feast.[79] But by the end of the fourth century, this one celebration had evolved into 'a series of commemorations recalling the successive phases of its past historical accomplishment: triumphal entry into Jerusalem, betrayal, Last Supper, passion, burial, resurrection'.[80] Rather than recite the story in a single service, the major events of the salvation narrative were spread out over several separate services, a development which served to organize the liturgical week into a narrative sequence.[81]

Gradually, over the centuries, the Christian year expanded to include ceremonies for all of the most important events in sacred history. A certain line of feasts traced out the mostly non-biblical life story of Mary, the Mother of God, from her conception (Conception of the Theotokos) to her unusual death and burial (Dormition):[82]

На бесъмьртьное твое оусъпенїе б҃це м҃ти животоу • облачи ап(с)лы • по въздоухоу въсхыщахоу и по мироу расѣꙗныꙗ въ единомь лицѣ • прѣдъсташа пр(с)чтоумоу тї тѣлоу • иже погребъше чьстьно • гласъ ти гавриль • поюще въпиꙗхоу • радоуисѧ • обрадованаꙗ • д҃во м҃ти безневѣстьнаꙗ • г҃ь съ тобою • съ нимь же ꙗко сн҃а си и б҃а нашего оумоли • съпасти д҃ша нашѧ.[83]

[76] Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, p. 65.

[77] P. F. Bradshaw and M. E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity* (Collegeville, 2011), p. 90.

[78] On the 'historicism theory', see T. J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York, 1990), p. 39; R. Taft, 'Historicism Revisited', in *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington DC, 1984), pp. 15–31.

[79] F. L. Cross, *St Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures* (New York, 1977), p. xix.

[80] Taft, 'Historicism Revisited', p. 15.

[81] On the connection between the papacy and the formation of liturgical narratives in the Latin West, see R. McKitterick, 'Liturgy and History in the Early Middle Ages', in K. A. Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel, and M. E. Fassler (eds.), *Medieval Cantors and their Craft* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 25–37.

[82] On the history of Marian feasts in the Christian east, see D. Galadza,*Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 246–51. On their development in the west, see É. Ó. Carragáin, 'Interactions between Liturgy and Politics in Old Saint Peter's, 670–741', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Old Saint Peter's, Rome* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 177–89. On the ideological implications of the feast for the city of Constantinople, see M. Fassler, 'The First Marian Feast in Constantinople and Jerusalem: Chant Texts, Readings, and Homiletic Literature', in Peter Jeffrey (ed.), *The Study of Medieval Chant*, (Suffolk, 2001), pp. 61–87.

[83] *Mineia praznichnaia na fevral'–avgust*, Sin. 895, 177.1–172.2, ed. O. V. Gulinaia and B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=62272010, (accessed December 2017).

At your deathless falling asleep, O Mother of God and mother of life, the clouds caught the apostles up in the air, and though they were scattered across the world, they formed a single choir in the presence of your immaculate body. Reverently burying it, they sang the song of Gabriel, crying out: 'Rejoice, O full of grace, virgin mother without bridegroom, the Lord is with you!' With them, implore [him] as your son and our God to save our souls. (Sticherion, Tone 6)

Another set of eight major feasts commemorated the earthly life of Jesus Christ from his conception in Mary's womb (Annunciation) to his elevation into the heavens (Ascension):[84]

Еже о насъ съвърши съмотрение • и юже на земли • съмѣшь съ нб҃есьныими • възне сѧ въ славѣ х҃е б҃е • никакоже не ѿлоучаю сѧ • нъ прѣбываю неостоупьно • и въпию къ любѧщиимъ тѧ • азъ есмь съ вами • и никтоже на вы.[85]

When you had fulfilled the dispensation for us, and united those on earth with those in heaven, you ascended in glory, O Christ God, not being parted from those who love you, but remaining with them, and crying: 'I am with you and no one will be against you!' (Kontakion, Tone 6)

By grafting these feasts onto the cycle of the seasons, calendrical time was transformed into a continuous, cyclical performance of the sacred past.[86] The mission of Christ, relived each year in the church's feasts, was made 'as much a part of the universal order as the waning and waxing of the moon or the apparent movements of the planets'.[87] From Advent to Epiphany, Great Lent to Easter Sunday to Pentecost, the passage of time inexorably carried eastern Christians through the ritual recitation of the founding myths of their faith.

The myths of the Byzantine rite were not identical with those of the Christian Bible. To be sure, selections from the Old and New Testaments were read constantly at Byzantine services, and were recognized by the church as the canonical account of Christian origins.[88] But the Bible did not contain many of the major events, characters, and plot-lines that appeared in the Byzantine liturgical past. There were hundreds of secondary myths that ran throughout the liturgical year, such as the myth that the Virgin Mary had entered into the 'holy of holies' of the Jerusalem temple as a small child (Entrance of the Theotokos):

84 On the historical development of these feasts in the Russian church, see G. S. Bitbunov, *Dvunadesiatye prazdniki (istoriko-liturgicheskoe opisanie)* (Moscow, 2011); Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization,* pp. 236–44.

85 *Tipografskii ustav*, ed. Uspenskii, vol. II, p. 203.

86 J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 93–94.

87 E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1997), p. 58.

88 T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (New York, 1993), p. 201.

Прч҃стаꙗ цр҃кы сп҃са • и многочьстьныї чьртогъ и дв҃ца • сщ҃ное съкровище славы бж҃иꙗ • дн(с)ь въводить сꙗ вб домъ гн҃ь • блг҃дать съвъводꙗщи дх҃ъмь бж҃ьствьнымь • юже поють анг҃ли бж҃ии • та бо есть сѣнь нб҃снаꙗ.[89]

The most-pure temple of the saviour, the precious ark and virgin, the sacred treasure of the glory of God, is brought today into the house of the Lord by the divine spirit, bringing grace with her. The angels of God extol her: 'She is the abode of heaven.' (Kontakion, Tone 4)

A great number of non-biblical myths also surrounded John the Baptist, from his birth (Nativity of Saint John the Forerunner), to his beheading (Beheading of Saint John the Forerunner), to the discovery of his severed head on three separate occasions (First, Second, and Third Finding of the Head of Saint John the Forerunner):

Глава агньца божию • проповедавъшию плътию ꙗвленааго • и вьсемъ покаꙗнию • небесьныи поуть • божьствьныими • винами възвестивъши • преже иродови безаконие обличивъши • и сего ради • оусѣкноу сꙗ отъ тѣла • и на дългое врѣмꙗ • подъимъши съкровени • ꙗко свѣтило ꙗви намъ • незаходимое сълньце • покаите сꙗ • въпиюще • и къ господоу приложите • доуша въ покаꙗние • подающюоумоу миръ • и велию милость.[90]

The head which preached the Lamb of God made flesh, which announced to all the path of heavenly repentance by way of God's commandments, which of old denounced the iniquity Herod, for which it was severed from the body, and for a long time was stored away, has shone upon us like a never-setting sun, crying out: 'Repent and submit your souls in compunction to the Lord, who grants peace and great mercy.' (Sticherion, Tone 5)

There were other specifically Byzantine myths as well. For instance, the myth that a wonder-working cloth from Edessa had preserved the earthly countenance of Jesus Christ (Translation of the Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-by-Hands):

Гй҃ не постыжимое съмотрение • еже о(т) векъ пронареченое • пришьдъ на знаменуеши • и то уверꙗꙗ • писаниꙗ ради къ авгару свои показалъ еси мирови образъ • и исплънилъ еси всꙗчьскаꙗ радости • нынꙗ украшꙗеши веньчь цр(с)кыи устрашаꙗеши • обновилъ ми еси пакы на немь образъ • бл(с)нъ еси сп҃се помилоу нас.[91]

O Lord, by your coming you revealed the providence proclaimed before the ages. And by confirming it in writing to [king] Abgar, you showed your earthly

[89] *MSON*, ed. I. V. Iagich (St Petersburg, 1886), vol. II, pp. 418–19.
[90] *GMF*, ed. D. Christians, T. Chronz, E. Smyka, and V. S. Tomelleri (Paderborn, 2009), vol. III, p. 360.
[91] Sin. 895, 185.1–185.2.

image to the world, thereby filling all with joy. Now you adorn the imperial crown, and establish and restore for us the icon. Blessed are you, O saviour, have mercy on us!
(Sticherion, Tone 6)

The Byzantine liturgical past not only included people and stories not found in the Bible. It also contained significant additions to the Gospel narratives. These additions comprised what one modern Russian theologian has called the 'Gospel according to the church', since the liturgical texts not only commented on the sacred texts but introduced entirely new scenes into the core Christian narrative.[92] Non-biblical scenes between characters were so common, in fact, that there was a specific genre of hymns, known as stavrotheotokion, which described Mary's lamentations at the foot of the Cross, scenes that were not recounted in the Gospels.

These hymns, and countless others like them, are evidence that Christian myth-making did not begin and end with the books of the Old and New Testaments. Rather, through the formation of the liturgical calendar, the local myths of the Byzantines gradually fused with those of the Bible to form a single sacred past. Over time, feasts for emperors, patriarchs, Stoudite ascetics, unmercenary healers, Roman martyr-warriors, and even the restoration of icons at the seventh ecumenical council were interwoven into the Christian calendar alongside older, biblical celebrations:

Образы видѧще вашего тѣлесе • ст҃иї • и вѣрою цѣлоующе ꙗ • чюдимъ сѧ вашимъ подвигъмь • соудищемъ ꙗже подъꙗсте твьрдо х҃а ради • ꙗже бо слово предъставлѧеть кънигами ст҃ыими • сиꙗ [бо] писаниемь показаеть вапы пьстрыми • вькоупь б҃оугодьноую обрѣтающе пользоу д҃шамъ своимъ • х҃са славословимъ равьно анг҃мъ показавъшаго вас • иконоборьца • ꙗко лающе ѿгонѧще.[93]

Seeing your bodily images, O holy ones, and kissing them with faith, we marvel at your heroic struggles at the judgement, which you bravely endured for the sake of Christ. For just as the word is represented in holy books, so these God-pleasing depictions in paint bring benefits to our souls. Like the angels, we praise Christ, who has enabled you to drive out the slandering iconoclasts.
(Sticherion, Tone 8)

When the brethren of the Caves went to church, they were therefore entering into a deeply immersive retelling of east Roman sacred history. At one feast, they kissed icons of Christ and Constantine. At another, they

[92] H. Alfeyev, 'Orthodox Worship as a School of Theology', Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, trans. William Bush, http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/12/1.aspx (accessed July 2014).

[93] *MSON*, vol. II, p. 73.

lit candles for the Virgin Mary and chanted hymns for Saint George the Dragon-Slayer:

За мирьскыи животъ • душ҃ю свою положьшааго • х҃а ц(с)рѧ • желаꙗ воинъ тъщить сѧ оумрети за нь • рьвьность велию бж(с)твьноую въ ср(д)ци имѣвъ • тъ самъ себе приведе • егоже вьси геѡргиꙗ ꙗко тепла застоупьника въспоимъ вѣрно • ꙗко славьна соуща хв҃а раба оуподобльша сѧ ꙗвѣ своемȣ влд҃цѣ • и къ комоуждо молѧща сѧ • приходѧща тъщить бо сѧ присно • и молить сѧ спс҃оу.[94]

The soldier rushes to die for Christ the emperor, who has laid down his soul for the life of the world. [For] having great divine zeal in his heart, he has offered himself. Let us all sing faithfully to George as an ardent protector, as a glorious servant of Christ, who clearly imitates his own master. And for anyone who approaches in prayer, he ever rushes to pray to the saviour. (Ikos, *podoben*)

At still other feasts, the monks read scriptures about Moses, or chanted canons about the apostles Peter and Paul, or sang elaborate hymns for Saint John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople:

Радуои сѧ здатозарьне и красьне • цр҃квьнаꙗ и бг҃одх҃(н)овенаꙗ пищѧль ѧзъце чл҃вколюбьно покаѧниѧ намъ различьныї образъ написо(ва)ꙗ • оуме [зла] златообразьне • ластовиче златооустаꙗ • голоу(би)ца же пѣс(нь)но межоурамие златозьрѧщи добродѣтели величани(и) • поточе златообразьне • проливаꙗ пиваниꙗ • оуста бж҃иꙗ и бж҃ьствьнаго чл҃вколюбиꙗ безбазньно • х҃оу моли сѧ послати дш҃амъ нашимъ (велию милость).[95]

Rejoice, gold-shining and splendid one, the divinely inspired and tuneful flute of the church! O tongue making known to us the many ways of repentance [in a manner] full of love for man! O mind of golden form, O swallow of golden lips, O songful dove, having pinions of sparkling gold, which shine golden with virtues! O spring bright as gold, pouring forth waters! O mouth of God, assuring of [his] endless divine love for mankind! Pray to Christ to grant our souls great mercy! (Sticherion, Tone 5)

There were feasts for wonder-working physicians, like the brothers Saints Cosmos and Damian, and for heresy-fighting Egyptian prelates, like Saint Peter of Alexandria:

ѿ вышьнѧго прчьта хв҃оу пастоухъ бывъ стадоу • на паствины животьныꙗ настави прѣмоудроуоумоу оучению ти • ѿгнавъ ариа • ꙗко вълъка некротъка • нашьдъша на нѣ • безбожьныими оучении • тѣ(мь) же и дш҃оу свою за нѧ ѿдавъ • пастырь нарече сѧ • ꙗкоже рече г҃ь • ст҃лю блаженыи • моли х҃а б҃а.[96]

[94] *GMA*, ed. D. Christians, T. Chronz, and H. Rothe (Paderborn, 2014), vol. III, p. 272.
[95] *MSON*, vol. II, pp. 363–64. [96] *Ibid*., p. 446.

Called from on high to be a shepherd of Christ's flock, you instructed it towards the path of life with most wise teachings. You drove out Arius, who had attacked it like an arrogant wolf with ungodly teachings. Having given up your life for them, you are therefore called a pastor, as the Lord said. O blessed hierarch, pray to Christ God! (Troparion, Tone 4)

Commemorations were held for 'passion-bearing' Roman soldiers, such as Saint Theodore the Recruit, and for renowned ascetics, such as Saint Simeon Stylites, a monk who lived thirty-seven years atop a pillar:

Пр(п)дбьне отъче • аще бы стълпоу вѣщати • не бы мълчалъ гл҃ати болѣзнии и троуды сльзы твоꙗ • нъ тъ бе носимъ тобою • и еже тѧ ношааше • яко дрѣво поимо сльзами твоими • дивиша сѧ ан҃гли • чюдиша сѧ члв҃чи • оужѧсоша сѧ дѣмони търпѣеиꙗ твоего • сумеоне прѣблаж҃не • моли сп҃сти дш҃а наша.[97]

O venerable father, if your pillar could speak, it would never be silent, proclaiming your pains, labours, and tears. For it is not [the pillar] that bore you, but you who supported it, like a tree, with your tears. Angels marvelled, humans were awestruck, and demons trembled [on account] of your patience. O most blessed Simeon, pray that our souls may be saved! (Sticherion, Tone 5)

Sometimes two commemorations were celebrated at once, as when Saint Demetrios, a fourth-century martyr killed in gladiatorial combat, was remembered together with a great earthquake that shook Constantinople in the year 740:

Велика ѡбрѣте въ бѣдахъ тебе помощьника селоунь • стр҃пче • поганыꙗ побѣждающа • ѧко и лоуевоу раздроуши гърдынию • и на соудищю оукрѣпи нестѣра • тако ст҃ыи х҃а б҃а моли даровати намъ велию милость.[98]

Thessalonika has obtained in you a great helper, O passion-bearer, conquering the pagans. For as you humbled the arrogance of Lyaios and strengthened Nestor in sufferings, pray fervently to Christ God to grant us great mercy. (Troparion, Tone 4)

Сего великаго въ п(с)ѣхъ вси • съшьдъше сѧ вѣрою • ꙗко храбъра хв҃а и мч҃нка дьмитриа • п(с)ѣми и пѣнии възъпиимъ къ вл҃дцѣ и творьцоу вьселенѣи • избавити ны ѿ троуса бѣдьнаго • члв҃клбче • мл҃твами б҃га и вьсѣхъ ст҃хъ мч҃нка • на тѧ бо оупъваемъ избавити сѧ бѣды и скърьби.[99]

Assembled together in faith, let us all honour with odes and hymns the brave martyr of Christ, Demetrios, and cry to the master and creator of the universe to deliver us from the dangerous earthquake, O lover of mankind, through the

[97] *MSON*, vol. I, p. 5. [98] *MSON*, vol. II, pp. 179–80. [99] *Ibid.*

prayers of the Theotokos and all the holy martyrs. For we rely on you to be delivered from dangers and tribulations. (Ikos)

Again, it should be emphasized that these are but a handful of examples from a liturgical past featuring hundreds of biblical and Byzantine heroes: 'ancestors, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and every righteous spirit made perfect in faith'.[100]

The cumulative effect of all of these feasts, celebrated day after day, was to immerse early medieval Christians, and the clerical caste in particular, in a shared mythological past. The moment they stepped foot into church, a special narrative world surrounded them on all fronts: the saints looked down from the walls and iconostasis, even as songs of their heroic deeds reverberated across the sacred space. This sort of storytelling was far from pure escapism, however. As discussed briefly in the introductory chapter, the liturgical services were not only a place for pious praying and singing. They were also a site where autocratic political propaganda was disseminated. For what the rites ultimately promulgated was a rigidly hierarchical model of Christian civilization: a divinely appointed power structure in which every citizen knew her or his place, from Christ enthroned in heaven, to his representatives enthroned on earth, to the warriors fighting on the battlefield, to the masses praying for their God-protected masters, to the monks praying for the forgiveness of their sins.

Thus, within the confines of the liturgical past, within its system of narrative norms and explanations, the rulers of the day were never an accident of chance or the victors of a chaotic and violent struggle for domination. They were God's favourites, the pious and benevolent keepers of the faith, especially elected to protect believers and extend the dominion of Christ to the far corners of the earth. The liturgical past was therefore more than just a story, populated with a colourful cast of God-bearing ascetics and golden-mouthed bishops. It was a narrative matrix, a model of social order, which justified the privileges of the ruling elite by propagating versions of a sacred past in which these privileges were bestowed by God himself. Christ, angels, saints, rulers, clergy, people: this was the hierarchy established by the Creator of all, and reinforced every time the deacon prayed a litany, the priest prayed a secret prayer, or the faithful venerated an icon of a righteous king or saintly soldier.

[100] The citation is from the anaphora of the divine liturgy. See Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, p. 312.

EXCAVATING THE LITURGICAL PAST

My suggestion here is that the worship of God, and the ritual retelling of his saving acts, was also a covert form of political indoctrination. The liturgical rites inculcated an explicitly eastern Roman social arrangement between ruler and ruled, and they embedded this construct in a series of sacred narratives about the conversion of the empire, the glorification of the emperor and empress, and the victory of Christianity over paganism, and orthodoxy over heresy. This is perhaps a provocative theory of liturgy, and I am not unaware of the questions and objections that may arise from it. How can one be certain, for instance, that these sacred stories were truly of any importance in early Rus? Or that the clergy were even performing the services, as they were recorded in the church books? Or that they were indeed able to understand and internalize the politics of the liturgical past?

There are several possible solutions to such questions, but in the second half of this book I shall focus on only one of them: the evidence of the liturgical past that can be excavated, like the base layer of palimpsest, from the surviving manuscripts of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. I contend that hidden within this foundational text there is proof of a powerful and extremely important Byzantine political tradition. In the chapters to come, I shall employ the methods of comparative philology and attempt to recover this tradition. Just as scholars in the past have attempted to identify a variety of textual sources, such as earlier Byzantine chronicles or chronographs, so I shall identify the liturgical sources of ten annalistic entries, spanning the sixty-year period from 955 to 1015. Two of the entries are devoted to Princess Olga, seven to Prince Vladimir, and one to both Vladimir and Princes Boris and Gleb. My aim is to reconstruct the ritual context that surrounded the creation of these passages, and my methodology is simple.

In each chapter, I shall use medieval church books to lay bare the liturgical subtexts underlying the story of the Christianization of Rus. In Chapter 4, I suggest that the tale of Princess Olga's conversion derives, in part, from tenth-century baptismal rubrics, possibly connected with the Great Church in Constantinople. I also discuss the notion of liturgical typologies and suggest that Olga is depicted as both a 'Slavic Mary', using hymns from the major feasts of the Mother of God, as well as a 'Slavic Forerunner', based on hymns from a series of feasts devoted to John the Baptist, Joachim and Anna, and Zachariah and Elizabeth. The next chapter demonstrates that Prince Vladimir's biography in the chronicle, from his rise to power in 980 to his death in 1015, is modelled upon the liturgical image of Constantine the Great. I show that the chronicle

depicts Vladimir establishing Christianity in Kiev in much the same way as the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena depicts 'the apostle Constantine' establishing it in the Roman Empire. I also explain how the chroniclers used the bishop's prayers at baptism and the consecration of a church in order to portray Prince Vladimir as the first bishop of Rus. Chapter 6 is devoted to the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb and the rite that comprises its main liturgical context, the eucharistic canon of the divine liturgy. I argue that the passage depicts Boris as a high priest and his brother, Gleb, as a liturgical sacrifice. I further illustrate how several prayers from the rite of consecration for a church may have provided the chroniclers with the overarching narrative template for their depiction of the origins of Christianity in early Rus.

Ultimately, I shall attempt to establish that the story of the conversion of Rus cannot be fully understood in isolation from the political mythology of the Byzantine rite. I hope to demonstrate that when a scholar is able to get inside the ritual habits of the religion, when she or he can perceive the liturgical rites from within, it opens up a vast and intricate web of previously unobserved meanings. The chapters that follow are my attempt to recover such latent and long-forgotten meanings in the text of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*.

Chapter 4

THE DAYSPRING BEFORE THE SUN: *Princess Olga of Kiev*

The first mention of Princess Olga in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* occurred in a brief annalistic entry for the year 903.

В лѣто. ѕ҃.у҃.а҃і. Игорвеи възрастъшю. и хожаше по ѡлзѣ и слушше его. и прививедоша ему жену ѿ плескова. именемь ѡльгу.[1]

In the year 6411 (903). Igor grew up and followed after Oleg, and obeyed [his instructions], and a wife was brought to him from Pskov, by the name of Olga.

The bride from Pskov went unmentioned for the next four decades, before resurfacing in the text of a peace treaty, concluded between Byzantium and Rus in the first half of the tenth century, and interpolated in the year 945.

мы ѿ (ро)да рускаго. съли и гостье. иворъ солъ и(го)ревъ. Вел(икаго кнѧз)ѧ рускаго. и ѡбъчии (сли)вуефастъ свѧтославль с҃нъ игоревъ. искусеви ѡ(льги кн)ѧгини . . .[2]

We are the envoys and guests from the people of Rus: Ivar, envoy of Igor, grand prince of Rus, and the general envoys: Vuefast [representing] Sviatoslav, son of Igor; Iskusevi from Princess Olga's Kiev . . .

In these early excerpts, Olga was little more than a name, a minor figure in her husband's story. But the next time the princess appeared in the chronicle text, she did so with a vengeance, quite literally. In four vivid and violent scenes, Olga exacted revenge on the Derevlians for murdering Igor, while he was out with his *druzhina* collecting tribute. In the first episode, she tricked an envoy of twenty men, who travelled to Kiev from the land of Dereva in order to propose a marriage tie between the Rus

1 *PVL*, 29, 12–15.

2 *PVL*, 46, 21–23. On the details of the peace treaty, see M. B. Bibikov, 'Rus' v vizantiiskoi diplomatii: Dogovory Rusi s grekami X v.', *DR*, 19 (2005), pp. 5–15.

princess and their ruler, Mal. Olga requested that the dignitaries be brought to her while seated in their boats. They agreed to this condition, only to be carried before her, thrown into a mass grave, and buried alive. Olga later duped a second envoy 'of the finest men from Dereva' in similar fashion, bidding them to bathe before their official reception and then setting fire to the bathhouse.[3]

The princess subsequently took the fight to the Derevlians, deploying a kind of Trojan horse strategy. Under the pretence of throwing a funeral feast for her deceased husband, Olga and her retinue entered the city where Igor was killed and arranged for a *trizna*, a traditional drinking ritual of Scandinavian origins.

ꙗко оупиша сѧ деревлѧне. (п)овелѣ ѡтрокомъ своимъ пити на нѧ. а сама (ѿ)иде кромѣ и повелѣ дружинѣ сѣчи деревлѧ(н)е. и исѣкоша ихъ. е҃. а ѡльга возъврати сѧ ки(е)ву и пристрои вои на прокъ ихъ.[4]

Once the Derevlians were drunk, she ordered her followers to attack them. And she herself went out and ordered the retinue to massacre the Derevlians. And they cut down five thousand of them. Then Olga returned to Kiev and prepared an army to attack [the survivors].

In 946, Olga returned to Dereva and laid siege to the city: 'Give me three doves and three sparrows from each house,' she told the inhabitants. 'For I do not wish to impose a heavy tribute on you, as my husband did. I request only this small gift.'[5] The princess promised, in return, to quit the siege and instructed the Derevlians to return to their homes. Soon after their departure, she commanded her soldiers to tie a piece of burning sulphur to each of the birds.

и повелѣ ѡльга ꙗко смерчесѧ пустити голуби и воробьи. воемъ своимъ. голуби же и воробьеве полетѣша въ гнѣзда своꙗ. ѡви въ голубники. врабьѣве жи подъ стрѣхи и тако възгараху сѧ голубьници. ѡво клѣти. ѡво вежѣ. Ѡво ли ѡдрины. и не бѣ двора идеже не горѧще. и не бѣ льзѣ гасити. вси бо двори възгорѣшасѧ . . . ꙗко взѧ градъ и пожьже и. старѣишины же града изънима.[6]

As evening fell, Olga ordered her soldiers to release the doves and sparrows. The doves and sparrows flew to their nests: the doves to the cotes and the sparrows under the eaves. Thus, the dove-cotes, the coops, the porches, and the haymows were set on fire. There was not a house that was not consumed, and it was impossible to extinguish the flames, since all the houses had caught fire at the same time . . . In this way, she took the city and burned it and captured the elders of the city.

[3] *PVL*, 57, 3–10. [4] *Ibid.*, 25–29. [5] *PVL*, 58, 31–59, 6. [6] *PVL*, 59, 18–28.

Following this fourth and final act of revenge, the warrior-princess returned to Kiev and acted as the regent for her son, Sviatoslav. The chronicle entry for the year 947 depicted her as a shrewd and competent leader in this capacity, as well, establishing trading posts, determining hunting boundaries, and collecting tribute.

So grand were Olga's ambitions, in fact, that in the annals for 955 she journeyed to Constantinople and appeared before the Byzantine emperor.

В лѣт. ѕ҃.у҃.ѯ҃ г. Иде ѡльга въ греки. и приде ц҃рюгороду бѣ тогда ц҃рь имѧнемь цѣмьскии. и приде к нему ѡльга. и видѣвъ ю добру сущю зѣло лицемъ. и смыслену. оудививъсѧ ц҃рь разуму еꙗ. бесѣдова к неи и рекъ еи. подобна еси цр҃твти въ гр(ад) с нами. ѡна же разумѣвши реч ко ц҃рю. азъ погана есмь. да аще мѧ хощеши крсти. то крст мѧ самъ. аще ли то не кр҃щюсѧ. и кртси ю црь с пт҃(а)рхмъ.[7]

In the year 6463 (955). Olga went to the Greeks and arrived in Constantinople. The emperor at that time was named Tzimiskes.[8] Olga appeared before him, and when he saw the beauty of her face and that she was intelligent, the emperor wondered at her mind. He talked with her and said to her, 'You are worthy to reign together with me in this city.' When Olga understood his words, she replied to the emperor, 'I am a pagan, and if you wish to baptise me, then baptise me yourself. Otherwise, I will not be baptised.' And so, the emperor and the patriarch baptised her.

The princess emerged joyously from the baptismal font, after which the patriarch blessed her and instructed her in the faith.

ѡна же поклонивши главу стоꙗше. аки губа напаꙗема. внимающи оученьꙗ. поклонившисѧ пт҃рарху гл҃щи. мл҃твами твоими вл҃дко да схранена буду ѿ сѣти неприꙗ(знь)ны.[9]

She stood and bowed her head, and like a sponge absorbing water, she drank in [his] teachings. [The princess] bowed before the patriarch, saying, 'Through your prayers, master, may I be preserved from the snares of the devil.'

Following the ceremony, the emperor resumed his amorous pursuit. He summoned the newly illumined one and proposed marriage. Once more, the northern princess proved cleverer than the powerful men surrounding her. She declined the emperor's offer by pointing out that it violated

[7] *PVL*, 60, 25–61, 3.

[8] Half of the surviving manuscripts, including the Laurentian Codex, indicate that the emperor was John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–76). The other half more accurately cite the name of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (r. 912–59).

[9] *PVL*, 61, 11–14.

the traditions of the Christian church, which forbade marriage between godparents and their godchildren:

ѡна же реч к(а)ко хочеши мѧ поꙗти крсть мѧ самъ. и нарекъ (мѧ т)ъщерью. а хсеꙗнехъ того нѣс закона а ты самъ вѣси. и реч црь переклюкала мѧ еси ольга. и дасть еи (да)ры многи злато и сребро. паволоки и съсуды р(а)зличныꙗ. и ѿпусти ю нарекъ ю дъщерью собѣ.[10]

She replied, 'How can you wish to marry me, after baptising me yourself, and calling me a daughter? Among Christians there is a law against this, as you yourself know.' Then the emperor said, 'You have outwitted me, Olga.' And he gave her many gifts of gold, silver, silks, and vases of different kinds. He then dismissed her, calling her his daughter.

Before travelling to Kiev, Olga visited the patriarch a second time and expressed concern about returning to her native land as a Christian. 'My son and my people are pagans,' she told the hierarch, 'May God preserve me from every evil!'[11] The patriarch responded with reassuring words, comparing the princess to a long line of Old Testament figures that God delivered from evil. He blessed her and she 'returned to her own land in peace'.[12]

The emperor was not so easily deterred, however. He made one final overture to Olga upon her return to Kiev, although this time his motivations were economic, rather than romantic. The princess rebuffed him again, suggesting that she would send precious gifts to the emperor if he spent as much time on the river *Pochaina*, in the land of Rus, as she had spent on the Bosporus. At this juncture in the story, the princess's political career came to an end and she began to focus exclusively on spiritual matters. The main priority was the conversion of her son, Sviatoslav, a fearsome warrior-prince renowned for his rugged lifestyle and heroism in battle. Olga implored him to accept baptism, but he paid little heed, indicating that his warriors would laugh at him for such a choice.

но ѡбаче любѧше ѡльга с҇на своего с҇тослава. рькущи волѧ б҇жьꙗ да будеть. аще б҇ъ хощеть помиловати род моего и землѣ рускиѣ. да възложить имъ н ср҇це ѡбратитискъ б҇у. ꙗкоже и мнѣ б҇ъ дарова. и се рекши молѧшесѧ за с҇на. и за люди. по всѧ нощи и д҇ни.[13]

Nevertheless, Olga loved her son Sviatoslav, saying, 'May the will of God be done. If God wishes to have mercy on my people and the land of Rus, then may he put it in their heart to turn to God, just as God granted it to me.' Having said this, she prayed night and day for her son and for the people.

[10] *Ibid.*, 19–25. [11] *Ibid.*, 26–28. [12] *PVL*, 62, 7–8. [13] *PVL*, 64, 6–11.

The annals for the next dozen years were dominated by the deeds of Sviatoslav, with hardly any mention of his mother. She reappeared rather suddenly in the entry for 969, however, in order to remonstrate her son for proposing to relocate his court further south, even as she lay on her deathbed.

о трех дн҃хъ оумре ѡльга. и плака сѧ по неи с҃нъ ею и внуци ею. и людье вси плачемъ великомь. несоша и погребоша и на мѣстѣ. И бо заповѣдала ѡльга не творите трызны над собою. бѣ бо имущи презвутеръ. сеи похорони блж҃ную ѡльгу.[14]

Olga died three days later. Her son and grandchildren wept and mourned for her, as did all the people with great weeping. They carried her out and buried her in a [chosen] place. Olga had commanded that a funeral feast not be celebrated for her, for she had a priest [at her service] and he buried the blessed Olga.

There followed a lengthy panegyric to the deceased. Olga was praised as 'the forerunner of the Christian land' and compared to the first rays of dawn. The passage concluded with a citation from the Wisdom of Solomon, stating that 'the righteous shall live forever' under the protection of God. The chronicler observed that the Lord 'had likewise protected the blessed Olga from the enemy and adversary, the devil'.[15] With these words, the panegyric drew to a close, and so too did the chronicle's biography of the shrewd and saintly princess from Kiev.

THE PRINCESS WITH A JANUS FACE

In the centre of classical Rome, between the Forum Romanum and the Forum Julium, stood a small shrine dedicated to Janus, the god of passages and transitions, beginnings and ends.[16] A bronze statue of the deity was displayed inside the temple and it had two faces, each looking in opposite directions. With one face, the statue beheld the past; with the other, it gazed into the future.[17] Ancient Romans who contemplated this god were therefore confronted with an image of liminality and flux. Here was a mysterious figure who seemed to be two things at once: a figure who mediated between two worlds, without belonging entirely to either.

Modern investigators have been struck with a similar sense when they examine the chronicle passages about Princess Olga. For historians, the disjuncture lies between history and legend, between the factual princess

[14] *PVL*, 68, 2–7. [15] *PVL*, 69, 5–7.

[16] L. Richardson, Jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1992), pp. 207–208.

[17] On the various interpretations of Janus in the Roman world, see K. Jenks, 'Janus', in C. Scott Littleton (ed.), *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology* (Singapore, 2005), vol. VI, pp. 770–74; J. Gardner, *Roman Myths* (Austin, 1993).

and her fictional representations. These researchers are not so much interested in Olga, the historiographical creation, as in the concrete historical ruler. They therefore tend to concentrate on the journey to Constantinople, since it is one of the few events corroborated by external sources. Reports of her visit appear in the *De ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitos, the *Synopsis historiarum* of John Skylitzes, and the chronicle notes of Adalbert of Magdeburg.[18] In the hands of historians, these records are usually compared with the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, and an attempt is made to reconstruct what really occurred during Olga's visit to the imperial court. Such an approach is now well into its third century of existence, and yet it has yielded little in the way of consensus. Historians continue to suggest a variety of dates and locations for the baptism, as well as conflicting explanations for why the princess chose to enter the hallowed waters in the first place.[19]

Philologists and folklorists focus on another sort of duality in the chronicle text. They too perceive distinct sides to Princess Olga, and they attribute them to different narrative traditions. The vengeful and cunning mass murderer is treated as the stuff of folk legends, sagas, and fairytales. She is seen as a product of pre-conversion culture, a heroine of pagan Rus, whose memory was preserved via oral storytelling.[20] The

[18] J. J. Reiske (ed.), *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1828), vol. I, pp. 594–98. H. Thurn (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (Berlin, 1973), p. 240. F. Kurze (ed.), *Regionis abbatis Prumiensis chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi* (Hanover, 1890), pp. 169–70.

[19] A. L. Schlözer, *Nestor'': Russische Annalen in ihrer Slavonischen Grund-Sprache verglichen, übersetzt und erklärt von August Ludwig Schlözer* (Göttingen, 1802–1809), vol. V, pp. 92–106. J. Thunmann, *Untersuchungen über die Geschichte der östlichen europäischen Völker* (Leipzig, 1774), pp. 394–405. E. D. Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (Moscow 1904), vol. I, pp. 74–84. G. Ostrogorskii, 'Vizantiia i Kievskaia kniaginia Ol'ga', in *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (The Hague, 1967), vol. II, pp. 1458–73. G. G. Litavrin, 'Puteshestvie russkoi kniagini Ol'gi v Konstantinopol, Problema istochnikov', *VV*, 42 (1981), pp. 35–48. D. Obolensky, 'Russia and Byzantium in the Mid-Tenth Century: The Problem of the Baptism of Princess Olga', *GOTR*, 28 (1983), pp. 157–71. D. Obolensky, 'The Baptism of Princess Olga of Kiev: The Problem of the Sources', *Byzantina Sorbonensia* (1984), pp. 159–76; D. Obolensky, 'Ol'ga's Conversion: The Evidence Reconsidered', *HUS*, 12–13 (1990), pp. 145–58. O. Pritsak, 'When and Where Was Ol'ga Baptized?', *HUS*, 9 (1985), pp. 5–24. A. V. Nazarenko, 'Kogda zhe kniaginia Ol'ga ezdila v Konstantinopol'?' *VV*, 50 (1989), pp. 66–83. A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki, kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh sviazei IX–XII vekov* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 219–310. J. Featherstone, 'Olga's Visit to Constantinople', *HUS*, 14 (1990), pp. 294–312. J. Featherstone, 'Olga's Visit to Constantinople in *De Cerimoniis*', *Revue des études byzantines*, 61, (2003), pp. 241–51. A. Poppe, 'Once Again Concerning the Baptism of Olga, Archontissa of Rus', *DOP*, 46 (1992), pp. 271–77. J. Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1448* (London, 1995), pp. 27–28. C. Zuckerman, 'Le voyage d'Olga et la première ambassade espagnole à Constantinople en 946', *Travaux et Memoires*, 13 (Paris, 2000), pp. 647–72. O. Kresten, '*Staatsempfänge' im Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel um die Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna, 2000), p. 10.

[20] A. Stender-Peterson, 'Die Varägersage als Quelle der Altrussischen Chronik', *Acta Jutlandica* 6, 1 (1934), pp. 127–55. E. A. Rydzevskaia, *Rus' i Skandinaviia v IX–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1978), pp.

virtuous Christian convert, on the other hand, is typically thought to be a clerical invention, a figure fashioned from biblical models, hagiographical stereotypes, and pious clichés.[21] The assumption underlying these interpretations is perhaps obvious, but it still deserves to be stated: the princess that one finds on the pages of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* is not identical with the historical personage.[22] Rather, she is a composite textual character, woven together from two kinds of source material, like a tapestry woven from two kinds of thread.[23]

Scholars generally study these threads individually. With few exceptions, they regard the stories of vengeance and baptism as separate entities, written by different authors, and not as a single, unified composition.[24] As is nearly always the case with chronicle studies, the main line of inquiry concerns sources and redactions. Where did the two traditions surrounding Olga originate and how did they come to be sewn together in the

195–202. A. A. Shaikin, *Analiz khudozhestvennogo proizvedeniia* (Alma-Ata, 1979), pp. 13–15. N. F. Kotliar, *Drevniaia Rus' i Kiev v letopisnykh predaniiakh i legendakh* (Kiev, 1986), p. 98. I. Chekova, 'Letopisnoe povestvovanie o kniagine Ol'ge pod 6453 g. v svete russkoi narodnoi skazki: Opyt opredeleniia zhanrovoi prirody', *Starob"lgarska literatura*, 23–24 (1990), pp. 77–98. N. S. Trubetskoi, *Istoriia. Kul'tura. Iazyk.* (Moscow, 1995), p. 56. M. N. Virolainen, 'Zagadki kniagini Ol'gi (Istoricheskie predaniia ob Olege i Ol'ge v mifologicheskom kontekste), *Russkoe podvizhnichestvo* (1996), pp. 64–67. E. A. Mel'nikova, 'Ustnaia traditsiia v Povesti vremennykh let: K voprosu o tipakh ustnykh predanii', in T. N. Jackson and E. A. Mel'nikova (eds.), *Vostochnaia Evropa v istoricheskoi retrospective: K 80- letiiu V. T. Pashuto* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 153–65. A. M. Ranchin, 'Semantika i struktura rasskazov ob Olege i Ol'ge v "Povesti vremennykh let"', *Philologiia*, 5 (2002), pp. 7–15.

21 N. I. Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkiia kniazheskiia zhitiia: Obzor redaktsii i teksty* (Moscow, 1915), p. 4. D. S. Likhachev, *Poetika drevnerusskoi literatury* (Moscow, 1979), p. 81. I. N. Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Germenevticheskie osnovy istochnikovedeniia letopisnykh tekstov* (Moscow, 2004), pp. 159–61. N. N. Bedina, 'Obraz sviatoi kniagini Ol'gi v drevnerusskoi knizhnoi traditsii (XII–XVI vv.)', *DR*, 4, 30 (2007), pp. 8–12. I. Chekova, 'Bibleiskie kody v letopisnom povestvovanii o kniagine Ol'ge', *DR*, 3/45 (2011), pp. 125–26. E. I. Sulitsa, 'Zhenskie personazhi drevnerusskoi slovesnosti: poeticheskaia obraznost' i printsip sinkretichnosti', *Vestnik Riazanskogo gos. univ.* (2014), pp. 76–90.

22 See F. Butler, 'Ol'ga's Conversion and the Construction of Chronicle Narrative', *RR*, 67, 2 (2008), p. 234.

23 A. A. Shakhmatov, *RDRLS* (St Petersburg, 1908), pp. 111–14. M. D. Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii Kievskoi Rusi* (St Petersburg, 1913), pp. 9–13. S. F. Platonov, 'Letopisnyi rasskaz o kreshchenii Ol'gi', *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, 1 (1919), pp. 285–87. A. G. Kuz'min, *Nachal'nye etapy drevnerusskogo letopisaniia* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 340–41. L. Müller, 'Die Erzählung der Nestorchronik über die Taufe Olgas im Jahre 954/55', *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 33 (1988), pp. 785–96. D. S. Likhachev, *Velikoe nasledie: Klassicheskye proizvedeniia literatury drevnei Rusi* (St Petersburg, 1997), pp. 43–133. D. A. Balovnev, 'Skazanie "O pervonachal'nom rasprostranenii khristianstva na Rusi": Opyt kriticheskogo analiza', *Tserkov' v istorii Rossii*, 4 (2000), pp. 5–46.

24 This practice has come under criticism. See S. Senderovich, 'Sv. Vladimir: K mifopoezisu', *TODRL*, 49 (1996), pp. 301–13; S. Senderovich, 'Metod Shakhmatova, rannee letopisanie i problema nachalo russkoi istoriografii', in V. Ia. Petrukhin (ed.), *Iz istorii russkoi kul'tury* (Moscow, 2000), vol. I, pp. 13–37; V. Ia. Petrukhin, 'Drevniaia Rus': Narod. Kniaz'ia. Religiia', in *Iz istorii russkoi kul'tury*, vol. I, pp. 13–371; A. M. Ranchin, *Stat'i o drevnerusskoi literature* (Moscow, 1999), pp. 105–21.

surviving manuscripts? Solutions to this problem vary widely and are often highly speculative. In two recent studies, for example, scholars have sought out parallels for the pagan image of Princess Olga in sources ranging from Iceland to medieval Germany, and from ancient Greece to the Indian subcontinent. Francis Butler compares her deeds to those of Queen Kriemhild in the late twelfth-century epic poem, *Nibelungenlied*, while also detecting similarities in several Scandinavian sagas and the Old Norse *Edda* of Snorri Sturluson.[25] Inés García de la Puente, meanwhile, points to a different set of models for Olga's depiction, such as Queen Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey*, Draupad in the Hindu epic *Mahābhārata*, and Rhiannon in a Middle Welsh collection of tales known as the *Mabinogion*.[26]

Another school of thought interprets the chronicle passage for 945 as a series of riddles.[27] On the surface, these puzzles appear to reproduce the classic folklore motif of a bride testing her suitors. Upon closer examination, however, they prove to have a still deeper layer of subtext: the funeral rites for a pagan prince in pre-Christian Rus.[28] 'Being carried in a boat is Olga's first riddle,' writes Dmitrii Likhachev, the doyen of Soviet-era medieval studies. 'It is also the first action in the [pagan Rus] funeral ritual. The second riddle involves a bath for the deceased, which corresponds to the second part of the rite. The last of Olga's riddles takes the form of a funeral feast and this matches the final stage in the burial service.'[29] Likhachev does not address Olga's fourth act of vengeance, since he considers it a later insertion in the text.[30] If his interpretation is indeed correct, then it is little wonder that the chronicle describes Olga as the 'wisest of all people'.[31] Under the guise of a betrothal, the princess

[25] F. Butler, 'A Woman of Words: Pagan Ol'ga in the Mirror of Germanic Europe', *Slavic Review*, 63, 4 (2004), pp. 771–93.

[26] I. García de la Puente, 'The Revenge of the Princess: Some Considerations about Heroines in the PVL and in Other Indo-European Literatures', in J. A. Alvarez-Pedrosa and S. T. Prieto (eds.), *Medieval Slavonic Studies: New Perspectives for Research* (Paris, 2009), pp. 193–202.

[27] D. Tschiževskij, *Geschichte der Altrussischen Literatur im 11., 12. Und 13. Jahrhundert: Kiever Epocher* (Frankfurt am Main, 1948), pp. 54–55.

[28] D. S. Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi i ikh kul'turno-istoricheskoe znachenie* (Leningrad, 1947), pp. 132–38. D. S. Likhachev, 'Kommentary', in V. P. Adrianova-Peretz (ed.), *Povest' vremennykh let* (Moscow, 1950), vol. I, pp. 296–97. B. A. Rybakov, *Kievskaia Rus' i russkie kniazhestva, XII–XIII* (Moscow, 1982), pp. 360–62. B. A. Rybakov, *Iazychestvo Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 365–75. I. Ia. Froianov, *Drevniaia Rus'* (Moscow, 1995), pp. 59–72. A. Koptev, 'Ritual and History: Pagan Rites in the Story of the Princess' Revenge (the Russian Primary Chronicle, under 945–946)', *Mirator*, 11 (2010), pp. 1–54.

[29] Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi*, p. 137.

[30] This notion was first put forward by Shakhmatov in *RDRLS*, pp. 108–10. For an opposing view, see V. M. Istrin, 'Zamechaniia o nachale russkogo letopisaniia: Po povodu issledovanii A. A. Shakhmatova v oblasti drevne-russkoi letopisi', *IORIaS*, 27 (1924), pp. 220–30.

[31] *PVL*, 108, 28.

performs the pagan rituals for burying and mourning her dead husband, while simultaneously taking revenge on his murderers.

Such cleverness is on full display again in the 955 chronicle entry, as the princess encounters the upper echelons of Byzantine society and learns more about their religion. The two-sidedness of her depiction has long fascinated scholars, and one particularly long-running debate concerns the strange marriage of clerical and folk materials in the text. The main question is which version of the princess came first. Was it the sly folk hero who outsmarts the flirtatious emperor or the meek convert who converses with the patriarch? In his seminal treatise, *Investigations into the Most Ancient Russian Chronicle Compilations*, Aleksei Shakhmatov casts his vote for the religious representation. He argues that the original written record about the princess was a now-lost hagiographical work, describing the events of her baptism and burial. Clerics at St Sophia's later interpolated this 'special tale' into the very first Rus chronicle, which Shakhmatov calls the *drevneishii kievskii svod* or 'most ancient Kievan compilation' of 1039. Thus, in his estimation, the princess began her textual afterlife not as a vengeful folk legend, but as a hero of the Christian faith. The legendary elements of her depiction, such as the emperor's courtship and her coy replies, did not appear in the text for over half a century. In fact, it was only in the 1090s that the editor of the *nachal'nyi svod* redacted the clerical tale together with an oral folk legend, thereby forming the chronicle narrative which survives today.[32]

Shakhmatov's speculations remain influential, even if scholars are reluctant to accept the entirety of his scheme. Nikolai Serebrianskii, Mikhail Priselkov, and Andrzej Poppe likewise detect a commingling of sources, and they too accord primacy to the clerical tale.[33] The same may also be said of Likhachev, although he takes the notion of an earlier text one step further. In his view, the story of Olga's baptism in 955 and her panegyric in 969 never constituted an independent ecclesiastical tale. Rather, these passages formed the opening sections of a much larger and more important clerical composition, 'The Tale of the First Spread of Christianity in Rus'. Likhachev pictures this hypothetical text as the proto-source, the bedrock, upon which all later Rus chronicles were assembled. He suggests that it was authored by clerics at the cathedral of Saint Sophia in the 1040s and that it comprised six stories: the baptism and burial of Princess Olga, the persecution of the Varangian martyrs, the conversion of Prince Vladimir and the mass baptism of Rus, the

[32] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. 111–14.

[33] Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkiia kniazheskiia zhitiia*, pp. 2, 24–25. Priselkov, *Ocherki*, pp. 9–13. Poppe, 'Once Again Concerning the Baptism of Olga', p. 274.

martyrdom of Princes Boris and Gleb, and the panegyric to Prince Iaroslav the Wise. These tales exhibit an identical style, terminology, and ideological orientation, the philologist claims, because they were originally a single work, which was only later divided into annals and expanded with oral folk materials.[34] Likhachev and Shakhmatov therefore share the conviction that some sort of long-lost religious text, possibly composed by Greek-speaking clerics at the metropolitan cathedral, served as the principal source of the chronicle account for Princess Olga.

Another set of scholars advance exactly the opposite argument. For these thinkers, such as Apollon Kuz'min, Ludolf Müller, and Dmitrii Balovnev, the visit to Constantinople is not a church tale contaminated with folk elements, but rather a folk legend interrupted by clerical insertions. They perceive a heroine who is first and foremost an oral legend, one whom later monastic editors did their best to transform into a Christian, mostly by adding biblical citations.[35] Still other researchers, such as Sergei Platonov and Igor Danilevskii, argue against the folk-clerical dichotomy altogether, suggesting that the 955 chronicle passage should be read as a unified, indivisible whole.[36] Their recommendation has gone largely unheeded, however, and when scholars shift attention to the Christian dimensions of the text, disagreement is once again the natural order of things. Everyone is quite certain that the religious image of Olga is modelled on earlier figures from sacred history, but the consensus ends there. Commentators suggest a variety of narrative templates, from sources as wide-ranging as the Bible and Christian Apocrypha to the interrelated set of genres which one liturgist has described as 'the three H's' – homiletics, hagiography, and hymnography.[37]

In the minds of some scholars, the presentation of the Christian convert from Rus owes a debt to the Old Testament and the Hebrew tradition of righteous women. Iliana Chekova, for instance, discerns similarities between Sarah's relationship with her son Isaac in the Book of Genesis and Olga's relationship with her son Sviatoslav.[38] In another place, the

[34] Likhachev, *Velikoe nasledie*, pp. 83–95.

[35] Kuz'min, *Nachal'nye etapy drevnerusskogo letopisaniia*, pp. 340–41. Müller, 'Die Erzählung der 'Nestorchronik' über die Taufe Olgas im Jahre 954/55', pp. 790–96. Balovnev, 'Skazanie "O pervonachal'nom rasprostranenii khristianstva na Rusi"', pp. 13–17.

[36] Platonov, 'Letopisnyi rasskaz o kreshchenii Ol'gi', pp. 285–87.

[37] A. Talbot, 'Alexander Kazhdan: In Memoriam', in Joseph Patrich (ed.), *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present* (Leuven, 2001), p. xvi.

[38] I. Chekova, 'Khudozhestvennoe vremia i prostranstvo v letopisnom povestvovanii o kniagine Ol'ge v Tsar'grade', in *Godoshnik na Sofiiskiia universitet 'Sv. Klement Okhridski'* (Sofia, 1993), vol. II, pp. 5–7.

same scholar argues that the portrayal of the princess is likewise based on the biblical figure of Rahab, from the Book of Joshua, since both women are said to 'shine like pearls in the mud' in roughly contemporaneous Slavonic texts.[39] A different sacred book of the Israelites, the First Book of Kings, is mentioned in the work of Igor Danilevskii. He claims that the chronicler constructed the 955 account in order to show Princess Olga visiting the patriarch of Constantinople in the same fashion that the Queen of Sheba visited the court of Solomon.[40]

For other scholars, the passages inspire a different set of associations. According to Roman Jakobson, the narrative model for Olga is not an obscure Old Testament queen, but rather a figure much closer in time: the tenth-century martyr Princess Ludmila of Bohemia. He maintains that the panegyric at the close of the 969 passage is founded on a homiletic text, 'The Sermon in Memory of Ludmila, Protectress of the Czech Land', which was compiled in Latin near the end of the eleventh century at the Sázava Monastery, fifty kilometres south-east of Prague.[41] This conjecture is forcefully disputed by A. A. Gogeshvili, however, who points out that the shared encomiastic terminology, upon which Jakobson's argument rests, may also be found in a Georgian *akathist* in honour of Saint Nina. He therefore concludes that all three works, namely, the Latin sermon, the Rus chronicle, and the Georgian hymn, derive from some earlier, undiscovered Byzantine text.[42] Gogeshvili makes no attempt to identify this text, and so the question remains: what was this mysterious, shared manuscript, and how did it circulate so widely? The Bulgarian scholar, Chekova, offers a solution to this conundrum in an article published in 2013. She proposes that the Czech, Rus, and Georgian materials contain similar themes and terminology because they were all influenced by the same liturgical document: the *akathist* to the Mother of God, composed by Saint Romanos the Melodist in Constantinople in the first half of the sixth century.[43] It is worth noting that Chekova is not the first to find traces of this well-known Byzantine hymn in the passages for Princess Olga. Elena Osokina

[39] I. Chekova, 'Letopisnaia pokhvala kniagine Ol'ge v Povesti vremennykh let: poetika i tekstologicheskie dogadki', *DR*, 4, 54 (2013), pp. 103–107. See also O. P. Likhacheva, 'Iako biser v kale', *TODRL*, 50 (1997), pp. 110–12.

[40] Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, pp. 159–61.

[41] R. O. Jacobson, 'Osnova slavianskogo sravnitel'nogo literaturovedeniia', in *Raboty po poetike* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 52–53.

[42] A. A. Gogeshvili, *Akrostikh v 'Slove o polku Igoreve' i drugikh pamiatnikakh russkoi pis'mennosti XI–XII vekov* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 55–57.

[43] Chekova, 'Letopisnaia pokhvala kniagine Ol'ge', pp. 92–103. On the historical development of this well-known liturgical creation, see A. Papadopulo-Keramevs, 'Akafist Bozhei Materi', *VV*, 10 (1903), pp. 357–401; A. Popov, *Pravoslavnye russkie akafisty, izdannye s blagosloveniia Sviateishego Sinoda: Istoriia ikh proiskhozhdeniia i tsenzury, osobennosti soderzh. i postroeniia* (Kazan, 1903).

arrives at a similar conclusion in her unpublished doctoral dissertation from 1995. She proposes that the chronicle entries contain materials from not one but two liturgical sources: the aforementioned *akathist* for Mary and the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena. Osokina concludes that the clerical rendering of Princess Olga is therefore modelled on both the Mother of God *and* the mother of Constantine, as they are both depicted in the church books.[44]

Osokina and Chekova are right to see liturgy in the chronicle accounts about Princess Olga, and they are right to attribute some of those elements to the liturgical commemoration of the Virgin Mary and empress Helena. Yet for all of the merits of their argument, they perhaps fall short of reconstructing the entire picture. Both scholars focus on a few verses from a very few liturgical manuscripts, without taking into account the totality of the liturgical calendar. As a result, they do not detect all the liturgical sources underlying the stories about Olga, but only a fraction of them. Their treatment of the Theotokos is representative in this respect. The Mother of God is praised in song at every service of every year, in addition to the half dozen or so other feasts devoted to key moments in her earthly life. To ignore these materials and focus exclusively on a single *akathist* is therefore akin to reducing a poet's *oeuvre* to a single poem or a composer's catalogue to a single aria. Such an approach may simplify matters, but it comes at a cost. For when liturgical sources are misidentified, or when they are reduced to a lone para-liturgical text like an *akathist*, it serves only to obfuscate the liturgy's deeper impact on the composition of a text.

The same holds true of the comparison to Saint Helena. The Roman empress is unquestionably a key model for the depiction of Olga, so much so that the princess is given the name Helena at baptism. Nevertheless, it is inaccurate to view her as the only other liturgical archetype of holy motherhood, alongside the figure of Mary. The Stoudite typicon included several feasts devoted to the strange and marvellous ways that holy women and men were born into the world. Some of these commemorations expanded upon well-known narratives from the New Testament, such as the birth of Christ, while others recounted events never mentioned in the Bible, such as the conception of the Theotokos. I should therefore like to suggest that that the clerics who described the saintly side of Olga did not draw on just one hymn for the Mother of God or a select few stichera for Saint Helena. I am persuaded, rather, that these priests and monks modelled their creation upon a far more expansive

[44] E. A. Osokina, 'Metodologicheskie problemy sootnosheniia gimnograficheskikh i agiograficheskikh proizvedenii', *Gimnologia* (2000), pp. 178–87.

narrative tradition, involving no less than nine church feasts. Like most things liturgical, these feasts were interconnected, and they worked together to recount the story of one very special extended family, a clan whose procreative prowess was said to be responsible for the salvation of the world.

CONCEPTIONS AND NATIVITIES, FOREMOTHERS AND FORERUNNERS

For a group of people strictly forbidden to reproduce, monks in Byzantium and Rus spent a surprising amount of time singing and praying about procreation. The hymns in their church books were hardly devoted to the normal happenings of human biology, however. They were concerned instead with the events of Christian soteriology, with the mystery of God made flesh. In the modern western world, these events are of course synonymous with the twenty-fifth day of December. This was an important date in medieval Constantinople and Kiev, as well, but it was not the only sacred birthday celebrated in these cities. In fact, the appearance of the Christ child was the culmination of a much broader narrative arc, which unfolded gradually over the course of the liturgical year. Chronologically, the first episode in this plot-line was the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos by Saint Anna. Every year, on 9 December, Christians in Rus gathered together and commemorated the moment that Mary was conceived by her parents, Joachim and Anna.

Цѣломоудрьнаꙗ анна · зарею божиею просвѣшаема · пророчьства рѣшащи · дверь непроходимоу · владыцѣ единомоу прохоюноу · свѧтоую дѣв8 въ чрѣвѣ приемлеть.[45]

The chaste Anna, enlightened by divine rays, fulfils the prophecy by receiving into her womb the holy virgin, the impassible gate, which only the Lord alone can pass [through]. (Canon, Ode 8, Irmos)

The conception of Mary was naturally complemented by another set of services dedicated to her delivery into the world. Somewhat counter-intuitively, this feast did not follow on the heels of the conception service but, rather, preceded it by slightly more than three months. As a result, each year on 8 September, clerics in Kiev celebrated the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, where they sang the following sticherion at vespers:

[45] *GMD*, ed. H. Rothe and E. M. Vereshchagin (Opladen, 1997), vol. II, p. 112.

Аще и бж҃иею волею нарочиты жены неплодъви родиша • нъ вьсѣхъ марию роженыихъ бо҃лѣпьно паче въсию • юко из неплодъвины преславьно рожьши сю мт҃ре • породи плътью вьсѣхъ б҃а выше естьства из бесѣменьна чрева • едина двьрь и единочадаго сн҃а бж҃ию • юже прошьдъ затвореноу съхрани • и вьсю премоудро съмотривъ • юко вѣсть самъ • вьсѣмъ чл҃вкомъ сп҃сение съдѣю.[46]

Even though, by the will of God, famous barren women have given birth, yet in divine majesty Mary is greater than all who have been born. For having been most gloriously born of a barren mother, she gave birth in the flesh to the God of all beyond nature, from a womb which knew not seed. She alone is the gate of the only-begotten Son of God, who passed through it, while preserving it closed, and who arranges all things wisely in accordance with his knowledge, [thereby] securing salvation for all men.

As this hymn suggests, other formerly barren couples were known to the clergy in Rus. Foremost among these were the high priest, Zechariah, and his wife Elisabeth. Like their slightly older relatives, Joachim and Anna, these two saints were remembered for miraculously bringing forth a child, long after the hopes of having offspring had passed. But whereas their righteous predecessors had given birth to the Mother of God, this elderly couple produced His greatest prophet, whose conception and birth were also accorded special feast days. On 23 September, for example, clerics attended the Feast of the Conception of Saint John the Forerunner and sang stichera such as this:

Ндоущоу въ ст҃аю ст҃хъ ст҃ыи пр҃коу же ст҃моу • ан҃глъ • юко писано есть • пристоупи тъгда • прогла(а)шаше • гл҃ѧ • оуслышана бысть мл҃тва и раздрѣшаеть сѧ неплодьство елисавеѳино • и роди(ть) ти • старьче • сн҃а иѡна пр҃дтчоу • свѣтильника сл҃нцоу • пр҃ка вышьнюмоу и гл(с)а ѿ дѣвицѣ б҃оотроковицѣ слово въсиювъшоу.[47]

As the holy priest and prophet entered the Holy of Holies, before him stood the holy Angel, as it is written, and [he] said: 'Your prayer has been heard and the barrenness of Elizabeth has come to an end. She will bear you, an old man, a son: John the forerunner, the lamp of the sun and prophet of the Most High, the voice of the Word who [will] come forth from the God-wedded Virgin.'

Churchmen encountered similar sentiments in the stichera for the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John, which was celebrated annually on 24 June:

Божию словоу хотѧщоу • ѡтъ дѣвы родити сѧ • анге ѡтъ старьць чреслъ исходить • велии въ роженыихъ женьскыихъ • и пророкъ вышии достоѧаше божьствьныимъ вещьмъ • преславьномъ быти

[46] *MSON*, ed. I. V. Iagich (St Petersburg, 1886), vol. I, pp. 71–72. [47] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

началомъ • паче въздрасти роженоуоумоу • и бесѣмене зачатие • творѧи чюдеса на съпасение доушамъ нашимъ.[48]

When the Word of God desired to be born of the Virgin, an angel came forth from elderly loins, [he who is] the greatest born of women and the foremost of the prophets. [It was he who] heralded things divine, the all-glorious beginning, the One born beyond time and conceived without seed, working wonders for the salvation of our souls.

The hymnography for these four feasts conveyed a consistent message. The appearance of the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist were important events in Byzantine liturgical mythology, but only insofar as they prepared the ground for a far greater moment: the advent of the God-man, Jesus Christ. His coming into the world was similarly celebrated at two very significant liturgical ceremonies. The first was the Feast of the Annunciation, commemorating the incarnation of Christ in Mary's womb, held each year on 25 March. At the matins service on that morning, clerics chanted the following troparion, three times consecutively, in the fourth tone:

Днь(с) сп(с)нию нашемоу начѧтокъ • и вѣчьнѣи таинѣ ꙗвление • с҃нъ б҃жии с҃нъ д҃вць бываеть • и гаврилъ блг(д)ть бл҃говѣстоуеть • тѣмь съ нимь б҃ци възъпиемъ • радоуи сѧ обрадованаꙗ г҃ь съ тобою.[49]

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, as Gabriel announces the glad tidings of grace. Let us cry with him to the Mother of God: 'Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with you!'

The corollary of this ceremony was naturally the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Christmas. A full forty-day fast was observed prior to this holiday, during which time a number of preparatory festivals were celebrated, such as the Feast of the Holy Forefathers and the Feast of the Holy Fathers. At these services, the officiating clergy remembered the ancestors of Christ:

Іави сѧ отъ вѣка на земли • проповѣда(на)ꙗ пророчьскъими вѣщании • дѣвица богородица • юже патриарси моудрии • и правьдьныхъ събори възвѣщають • съ нимиже ликоуеть и женьское благолѣпие • сарра • ревека • рахиль и анна же • и славьнаꙗ мариꙗ мосѣова въкоупѣ • съ тѣми радоують сѧ и мирьстии коньци • вьсѧ тварь славить • ꙗко зижитель вьсѣхъ • богъ родити сѧ • грѧдеть и подати велию милость.[50]

48 *Stikhirar' mineinyi, notirovannyi, stikhiry s 12 dek. Po 31 avg.* Sof. 384, 56.1, ed. O. V. Gulinaia and B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=83860373 (accessed March 2018).

49 *TAS*, ed. A. M. Pentkovskii (Moscow, 2001), p. 333.

50 *GMD*, ed. D. Christians, D. Stern, and A. Wöhler (Opladen, 1999), vol. III, p. 58.

The virgin Mother of God, prophesied from the ages in the proclamations of the prophets, has appeared on earth. The wise patriarchs and the assembly of the righteous proclaim her, and with them rejoices the adornment of women: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Anna, together with the glorious Miriam, [the sister] of Moses. The ends of the world rejoice with them and all Creation gives glory. For God, the creator of all, comes to be born, to grant the world great mercy.

(Sticherion, Tone 5)

At this point, the internal logic of the Byzantine liturgical calendar should be coming into sharper focus. In hymn after hymn, at feasts spread across several months, medieval Christians were taught that the Creator of All could not simply appear on earth out of thin air. A special and holy path had to be readied for Him and this sacred task was accomplished by a single blood line. The ancient forebears listed above, 'the assembly of the righteous', were necessary for the appearance of Joachim and Anna, and Zechariah and Elisabeth, who were in turn necessary for the appearance of Mary and John, the two figures whose absolutely unique holiness served as the precondition for the Incarnation. This chain of generations, longing and preparing for the manifestation of the Messiah, featured prominently in the hymnography at Christmas:

Едема вифлеѡмъ отъвьрзе • придѣте видимъ пищю въ таинѣ обрѣтохомъ • придѣте приимѣмъ соущаꙗ раискаꙗ въноутрь вьртьпа • тоу ꙗви сѧ корень ненапоенъ прозѧбаꙗ отъпоущение • тоу обрѣте сѧ кладѧзь неископанъ егоже пити давыдъ древле въжада сѧ • тоу дв҃аꙗ рожьшиꙗ младеньца жажю оустави абие адамовоу и давыдовоу • того ради и къ сем8 идемъ къде роди сѧ • лю(д) • отроца младо прѣвѣчьныи богъ.[51]

Bethlehem has opened Eden. O come and see and let us take possession of the hidden food. O come and let us receive the One Who is inside the heavenly cave. Here the unwatered root has appeared there, which blossoms forth forgiveness. Here the undug well is found, from which David longed to drink. Here the Virgin quenches the thirst of Adam and David by bearing a child. Wherefore, let us hasten to this place, where is born [and the people say in unison] 'a young child, the pre-eternal God'. (Ikos, Tone 3)

What all of these hymns emphasize is that the salvation of the world was not simply the story of a single saviour, even if that figure were God Himself. Redemption came with an extensive intergenerational background story. It had a concrete and well-established narrative shape. Righteous forebears paved the way for zealous forerunners and holy mothers, who preceded the emergence of a very special kind of man, a chosen king, who guided his

[51] *GMD*, ed. E. M. Vereshchagin, A. G. Kraveckij, and O. A. Krasheninnikova (Paderborn, 2006), vol. IV, pp. 16–17.

people to everlasting salvation. This was one of the core mythological paradigms that clerics in Rus internalized through the liturgy, and it was therefore one of the paradigms that they reproduced in the stories about Olga. Indeed, as we shall see, these men employed specific and highly evocative materials from the conception and nativity feasts outlined above, in order to place the blessed princess among truly rarified company.

But before turning to the philological excavation of these materials, there is still another set of Byzantine liturgical rites that must be taken into account. For the saintly side of Olga is not only fashioned from the hymns for holy mothers and forerunners found in the Menaion. There is a second church book, and a second series of services, never before mentioned in the scholarship, which also played a role in the making of the 955 and 969 chronicle entries. That book is the Euchologion, or *Sluzhebnik* (*Служебник*), and those services are the ancient sacraments of baptism and chrismation. These ceremonies were performed over every new member of the medieval eastern church, be it a future senator of Constantinople or a pagan convert on the northern frontier. They were the rites that made Christians of highborn babies and middle-aged barbarians, and in the early twelfth century, they were the rites that allowed the editors of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* to write a tale about the baptism of Princess Olga, some 150 years after the event had taken place.

'AS MANY AS HAVE BEEN BAPTISED INTO CHRIST . . . '

What words did the patriarch pray, as Princess Olga descended into the holy font? What hymns did her grandson Vladimir hear, nearly half a century later, when he received the oil of chrismation upon his brow? Were these the same songs and petitions that clerics in eleventh- and twelfth-century Kiev learned by heart, as they baptised children and the occasional adult convert from paganism? Or had the sacraments of initiation already undergone significant revisions by that time, after being translated into Slavonic and copied and re-copied over the course of several centuries? To answer such questions, one naturally turns to the archival collections and hunts about for the relevant early medieval church books. The search inevitably ends in frustration, however, once it becomes clear that half of the necessary manuscripts are nowhere to be found. Not a single text of the baptism or chrismation services survives from the first 350 years of Christianity in the land of Rus. In fact, the earliest East Slavic manuscript containing these rites appears to be a *Sluzhebnik*, originally discovered in the library of the Cathedral of Saint Sophia in Novgorod, dating to the second half of the fourteenth

century.[52] There are also fragments from three eleventh-century Euchologions, written in Glagolitic, but these remnants fail to preserve the sacraments of initiation.[53]

One might be tempted to despair at this state of affairs, as did the first great Russian scholar of the initiation rites, Aleksandr Almazov. In 1884, this well-respected church historian and doctor of canon law published a full-length history of baptism and chrismation in the eastern church, from its origins until the nineteenth century.[54] At the conclusion of the work, he appended the most ancient texts available to him, which included a Greek-language baptism service from the tenth century and the aforementioned Slavonic service from nearly 400 years later. The scholar made no attempt to hide his scepticism concerning the time span in between the two manuscripts. 'We have set as a goal plainly and conscientiously to present the historical development of these services,' he wrote in the preface to the edited texts. 'But that goal can only be achieved, so far as the Russian church is concerned, in the period from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries.'[55]

Fortunately, Almazov's successor was not nearly so pessimistic. On the contrary, Miguel Arranz of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome spent much of his career recovering precisely those services that Almazov had deemed irretrievably lost. In a series of books and articles published from 1982 to 2003, the Jesuit priest and his collaborators painstakingly reconstructed every word and gesture of the initiation sacraments, as they were performed in early medieval Constantinople and Kiev.[56] Of particular importance is an article that appeared in 1988 to commemorate the 1000-year anniversary of the baptism of Rus, in which Arranz pieced together the rites of initiation used to bring Princess Olga, Prince Vladimir, and their subjects into the Christian fold.[57] Working with a team of researchers at the Theological Academy in Leningrad, the liturgist compared four main Byzantine manuscripts, such as the eighth-century Barberini Gr. 336 and the tenth-century Paris Coislin Gr. 213, with an early seventeenth-century Slavonic rite for the reception of Latin

[52] *Sluzhebnik*, Sof. 526, ed. T. I. Afanas'eva, E. V. Krushel'nitskaia, O. V. Motygin, A. S. Slutskii, www.byzantinorossica.org.ru/sof-catalog.html (accessed March 2018).

[53] T. I. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v slavianskoi traditsii (po sluzhebnikam XI–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 2015), p. 24,

[54] A. I. Almazov, *Istoriia chinoposledovanii Kreshcheniia i Miropomazaniia (I–XIX vv.)* (Kazan, 1884).

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 687.

[56] M. Arranz, 'Les sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain', parts 1–10, *OCP*, 48–55 (1982–89). M. Arranz, *Izbrannye sochineniia po liturgike. Tom I. Tainstva Vizantiiskogo Evkhologiia* (Rome/Moscow, 2003), vol. I, pp. 207–437.

[57] M. Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', *Simvol*, 19 (1988), pp. 69–100.

heretics.[58] While analysing these manuscripts side by side, Arranz noted their similarities and concluded that the Slavonic text had somehow managed to preserve the ancient Constantinopolitan rites of chrismation and baptism for an adult pagan convert. He subsequently published a reconstruction of how these rites were performed in tenth- and eleventh-century Rus, following the *ordo* of the medieval Greek manuscripts, and using the translations from the early modern Slavonic service. The result of such an approach is admittedly hypothetical, but it is nevertheless the most trustworthy treatment to date. I shall therefore cite from Arranz's study in this chapter and the remainder of the book, using the modern Cyrillic script that appears in his reconstructed text. This decision might strike some as controversial, especially given Almazov's profound scepticism regarding such an endeavour. Yet the earlier scholar's misgivings were perhaps unnecessarily reductive. While it is true that innumerable minor variations are found from manuscript to manuscript, a rather remarkable historical continuity is also evident. Indeed, as Arranz notes, the sacraments of initiation originally developed in Constantinople 'retain nearly the same order [in the eastern church] today that they had in the eighth century'.[59]

What did these liturgical ceremonies look and sound like? In all likelihood, they were solemn, austere, mystical, and very beautiful. They were certainly not for the lazy or faint of heart. Admittance to the medieval eastern church was a prolonged affair, requiring a good deal more than having one's head dunked in a bath. The process consisted of several distinct rites, which were performed over a period of nearly two months, often in conjunction with Great Lent. The first of these marked the neophytes' formal reception into the catechumenate. At the start of this service, the presiding bishop bid the newcomers to prostrate before the doors of the church. He blessed them three times with the sign of the cross and prayed:

Благословен еси Господи Боже, Отче Господа нашего Иисуса Христа, иже от всех язык избирая себе люди изрядни, ревнителя добрых дел: Ты и сего пришедшаго святей твоей церкви, раба твоего ИМЯРЕК благослови, и отверзи ему очи к дивных твоих чюдес разумению, отверзи ему уши во услышание божественных словес твоих, соедини его оглашенным народа твоего, яко да во время благоприятно сподобится паки бытия, одеяния нетления.[60]

[58] For a critical edition of the eighth-century text, accompanied by an Italian translation, see *L'Eucologio Barberini Gr. 336*, ed. S. Parenti and E. Velkovska, 'Ephermerides Liturgicae Subsidia', 80 (Rome, 2000).

[59] Arranz, *Tainstva Vizantiiskogo Evkhologiia*, p. 211.

[60] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 76.

Blessed are you, O Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who selects unto yourself a chosen people from all nations, adherents of good deeds. Bless now your servant, NAME, who has come to your holy church. Open his eyes to the understanding of your wondrous miracles, open his ears to the hearing of your divine words, and unite him to the catechumens among your people. So that at the acceptable hour he may be vouchsafed a new existence and the garments of incorruption.

The prelate again made the sign of the cross over the neophytes and said three times, 'May his name be written [in the ranks] of catechumens.' He then pronounced one final petition, after which he instructed the newly enlisted servants of God to fast for forty days and to recite prayers morning, mid-day, and evening.

At the conclusion of the fast, the initiates returned and the bishop performed another brief service, signifying the start of a second catechetical period. According to Arranz, during this phase of the initiation process, neophytes came to church every day and participated in the prayers of exorcism. These were petitions designed to protect catechumens from the assaults of the devil, the enemy of mankind, who fought to prevent them from making it to the day of baptism. Repetition was evidently the church's best weapon in this spiritual warfare, because the bishop repeated each exorcism ten times. The result was a rather dramatic ritual, pitting the prince of darkness against the leaders of Christ's church, in a battle for human souls. In the first prayer, the cleric addressed the devil head on:

Запрещает тебе диаволе, пришедый в мир и вселивыйся в человецех, да разрушит твое мучительство и человек измет . . . убойся, изыди и отступи от создания сего и да возвратишися ниже утаишися в нем, ниже да срящеши его или действуеши ни в нощи, ни во дни или в часе или в полудне, но отиди во свой тартар даже до уготованного великаго дне суднаго . . .[61]

The Lord, who came into the world and made his abode among men, lays you under ban, O devil. May he overthrow your tyranny and deliver men . . . Be afraid, retreat, and depart from this creature, and may you not return again, neither hide yourself in him, neither seek to meet him, nor to influence him, either by night or by day, either in the morning or at noonday. But depart to your own infernal abyss until the great and appointed day of judgement . . .

The bishop made similar demands in subsequent petitions, including this one from the final exorcism:

[61] Arranz, *Tainstva Vizantiiskogo Evkhologiia*, pp. 292–93.

Господи Саваоф Боже Израилев, исцеляяй всякий недуг и всякую язю, призри на раба твоего взыщи, испытуй и отжени от него вся действа диаволя, запрети нечистым духом и изжени я, очисти дела руку твоею, и острое твое употребивый действо, сокруши Сатану под нозе его вскоре и даждь ему победы на него и на нечистыя его духи, яко да от тебе милость получив сподобитися безсмертных и небесных твоих таин . . .[62]

O Lord of Sabaoth, the God of Israel, who heals every malady and every infirmity. Look upon your servant, save him, search him, and drive away from him every operation of the devil. Forbid the unclean spirits, and expel them, and purify the works of your hands. And exerting your mighty power, speedily crush down Satan under his feet, and give him victory over the same, and over his unclean spirits. That having obtained mercy from you, he may be made worthy to partake of your heavenly mysteries . . .

The showdown between the bishop and the devil continued at another evocative service, carried out on the eve of baptism, in which the catechumen repeatedly renounced Satan and swore allegiance to Christ. At this ceremony, after celebrating the third and sixth hours, the bishop came out into the ambo and instructed the neophytes 'to stand with fear and be set free, for this is the end of your catechesis'. He reminded them once more about the basics of the faith and then directed them to turn westward and pronounce the following words:

Отричуся сатаны и всех дел его и всея службы его и всех ангел его и всего студа его.[63]

I renounce Satan and all of his works, and all of his services, and all of his angels, and all of his shame.

The call-and-response continued for some while, as the bishop asked fifteen times whether the catechumens had indeed renounced Satan and united themselves to Christ. The initiates responded in the affirmative after each question and then reinforced their commitment by symbolically spitting on the devil and reciting the Nicene Creed. Several lengthy prayers were subsequently read by the bishop, followed by a great litany, and the laying on of hands. Finally, the deacon instructed the faithful to bow their heads and the bishop prayed:

Господи спасе наш иже всем хотяй спастися и в разум истины приити, возсияти свет разума в сердых наших и еже к святому просвещению благоукрашаемым, и сподоби тех бессмертнаго ти дара и совокупи тех святей твоей соборней и апостольстей церкви. Твое бо есть миловати и спасати и тебе славоу возсылаем Отцу и Сыну и Св. Духу ныне и присно и во веки веком. Аминь.[64]

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 297. [63] *Ibid.* [64] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

O Lord our Saviour, who desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, shine the light of reason upon our hearts and upon those who are arrayed for holy illumination. Make them worthy of your immortal gift and unite them to your holy, catholic and apostolic church. For yours it is to have mercy and to save, and to you do we ascribe glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

On the following day, the initiates gathered in the baptistery and awaited the holy and saving sacraments. The ceremony opened with the great blessing of waters.[65] The deacon intoned a special litany 'for those approaching holy illumination' and the hierarch silently recited a long petition, asking God to strengthen him in the service of 'the great and most heavenly mysteries about to take place'.[66] Next, the bishop stood above the holy font and pronounced a very ancient prayer, parts of which predated the fifth century. Three times he declared in a loud voice:

Велий еси Господи и чудна дела твоя и ни едино же слово довольно будет к пению чудес твоих.[67]

Great are you, O Lord, and marvellous are your works, and there is no word which suffices to sing of your wonders.

The prayer went on to praise the creation and salvation of the world, before drawing to a close with an epiclesis. The opening line was again repeated three times:

Ты убо человеколюбче Царю, прииди и ныне наитием святаго твоего Духа и освяти воду сию. И даждь ей благодать избавления, благословение Иорданово: сотвори ю нетления источник, освящения дар, грехов разрешение, недугов исцеление, демонов всегубительство, сопротивным силам неприступну, ангелския крепости исполнену. Да бежат от нея наветующии созданию твоему яко имя твое Гди призвах дивное и славное и страшное сопротивным.[68]

O King who loves mankind, come now and sanctify this water by the indwelling of your holy Spirit. And grant to it the grace of redemption, the blessing of the Jordan. Make it the fountain of incorruption, the gift of sanctification, the remission of sins, the healing of infirmities, the final destruction of demons, inaccessible to hostile powers, filled with angelic might. Let those who would ensnare your creature flee far from it. For I have called upon your name, O Lord, and it is wonderful, and glorious, and awesome even unto adversaries.

The bishop dipped his finger in the water and made the sign of the cross three times, whilst repeating, 'Let all adverse powers be crushed beneath

[65] On the history of this rite, see N. Denysenko, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany: The Eastern Liturgical Tradition* (Burlington, 2012).
[66] Arranz, *Tainstva Vizantiiskogo Evkhologiia*, p. 329. [67] *Ibid.*, p. 331. [68] *Ibid.*, pp. 333–35.

the sign of the image of your cross.' He further requested 'that? no demon of darkness be permitted to conceal himself in the water' and, following another lengthy prayer, concluded:

Явися Гди на воде сей и даждь претворитися в ней крещаемому, во еже отложити убо ветхаго человека тлеемаго по похотям прелести, облещися же в новаго обновляемаго, по образу создавшаго его, да быв сраслен подобию смерти твоея крещением общник и воскресения будет, и сохранив дар святаго твоего Духа и возрастив залог благодати, приимет почесть горняго звания и сопричтется перворожденным, написанным на небеси, в тебе Бозе и Где нашем Іисусе Хрісте.[69]

Manifest yourself, O Lord, in this water, and grant that he who is baptised within it may be transformed, in order to put away the old man, which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh, and that he may be clothed with the new and restored man, according to the image of Him Who created him. That being buried after the manner of your death through baptism, he may become a partaker of the resurrection. And having preserved the gift of your Holy Spirit and grown in the measure of grace, may he receive the prize of his high calling, and be numbered with the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, in You, our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The celebrant once more made the sign of the cross in the baptismal waters, this time with a candle dipped in holy chrism, and then he announced the first prayer of the immersion ritual. When this was finished, he put two fingers into the blessed oil and anointed the initiate's forehead, hands, and shoulders, saying, 'The servant of God, NAME, is anointed with the oil of gladness, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' After weeks of preparation, the climactic moment had now arrived. The initiate descended into the holy font, where the bishop submerged his head under water three times, in honour of each member of the Godhead. Or as the rubrics in the church books describe the act:

И тако крещает его святитель рукою своею, погружая трижды и возводя. Первое погружая глаголет: Крещается раб божий ИМЯРЕК во имя Отца, аминь. И второе погружая глаголет: И Сына, аминь. Третие погружая глаголет: И святаго Духа, аминь.[70]

And thus the bishop baptises him with his own hand, submerging and lifting him back up three times. Submerging the first time, he says: 'The servant of God, NAME, is baptised in the name of the Father, amen.' And submerging a second time, he says: 'And of the Son, amen'. Submerging a third time, he says: 'And of the Holy Spirit, amen'.

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 336–37. [70] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 88.

The newly baptised was led out from the blessed waters, as the cantor chanted verses from the thirty-first psalm and the deacon intoned yet another litany. The bishop said one more prayer, looking ahead to the sacraments still to come, and then everyone sang in unison the holiest of baptismal hymns: 'As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!'[71] This was chanted three times and then began the rite of holy chrismation. The hierarch took up the holy chrism and anointed the initiate's forehead, eyes, nose, lips, ears, breast, hands, and sternum. As he made the sign of the cross on each of these body parts, he repeated the words, 'The seal of the gift of the holy Spirit, amen'. Once the chrism had been administered, a cross was hung around the neck of the new Christian 'for the preservation of soul and body' and he was clothed in white robes, 'the garments of rejoicing'.[72]

The ritual was now approaching its end. The bishop tonsured the initiate by cutting off a few strands of hair, which were apparently mixed with hot wax and placed within the walls of the church.[73] He then laid his hand on the head of the neophyte and asked God to bless him as he had once blessed King David, so that the convert might 'live to a ripe old age . . . and behold the good things of Jerusalem all the days of his life'.[74] Upon finishing, the prelate led the newly illumined in a procession around the holy font, which they circled three times, while again singing the hymn, 'As many as have been baptised into Christ . . . '[75] There is some confusion about what occurred next. According to the seventeenth-century Slavonic text, the bishop continued with the rite of churching, during which he read aloud a series of instructions concerning proper Christian conduct. Yet Arranz insists that this was not the actual order of events. He believes that the churching ceremony constituted the first part of the initiation process and not the last, since it normally appears at the beginning of the extant Greek-language manuscripts.

It never occurred to the Spanish liturgist, however, to examine the story of Princess Olga's visit to the imperial court and compare it with his own reconstructed service for an adult pagan, brought into the church according to the Constantinopolitan rites. This is an oversight worthy of consideration. Although the chronicle deals with the conversion of an adult pagan princess, baptised within the walls of the Imperial City, it was nevertheless written by church men in late eleventh- or early twelfth-century Rus. Might the chronicle text therefore provide a clue as to when

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89. [72] *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91. [73] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[74] Arranz, *Tainstva Vizantiiskogo Evkhologiia*, pp. 366–67.
[75] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 92.

and how, exactly, the churching ceremony was performed in Kiev at this time?

A close reading of the passage can reveal precisely this information, and thus the liturgical excavations undertaken below are doubly significant. For when the liturgical context that surrounded the chroniclers is recovered and reassembled, it not only brings to light long-forgotten meanings in the text of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* but, perhaps just as importantly, also provides a different kind of evidence, from a different kind of written source, for those wishing to reconstruct the history of liturgy in early Rus.

THE MOTHER OF GOD AND THE MOTHER OF RUS

At this point, some readers may be entertaining doubts. On the one hand, they have heard of fire-bombing birds, mass killings, and flirtatious emperors. On the other, they have encountered the hymns of Christmas and the prayers of chrismation. What sort of kinship could these two sources have possibly shared? What trade did liturgical feasts have with folk tales? The answer, it seems, leads back to the 'two faces' of Princess Olga. I agree with Shakhmatov, Likhachev, and the many others who perceive these passages as a conflation of ecclesiastical and legendary materials. Yet unlike these thinkers, I see no reason to attribute the princess's religious depiction to earlier non-extant tales or hagiographies, or to biblical chapter and verse. For upon closer inspection, it turns out that the princess's saintly side almost entirely comprises materials from the two kinds of services reconstructed above: the rites of initiation in the Euchologion and the feasts for holy mothers, forebears, and forerunners in the Menaion. The 'blessed Olga' is therefore best understood not as a biblical or hagiographical creation but rather as a liturgical one. She is a textual figure fashioned from the songs, prayers, and readings of the liturgy, and there is no need to resort to hypothetical texts in order to explain her representation in the chronicle.

Let us consider the description of Olga's baptism in the year 955. In the excerpt below, the emboldened text represents materials that derive from the initiation rites and the italicized text signifies materials from the Menaion:

и кртси ю црь с пт҃(а)рхмъ. просвѣщена же бывши. радовашесѧ д҃шею и тѣломъ. и пооучи ю патреархъ ѡ вѣрѣ. реч еи *блгсна ты в [женах] руских. ꙗко возлюби свѣтъ. а тьму ѡстави. блглсвти тѧ хотѧть с(нве) рустии. в послѣдннии родъ внукъ твоих.* **и заповѣда еи ѡ црк҃внмь оуставѣ. ѡ млтвѣ и ѡ постѣ. ѡ млтсни и ѡ въздержаньи тѣла чиста. ѡна же поклонивши главу стоꙗше.** аки губа напаꙗема. **внимающи оученьꙗ. поклонившисѧ пт҃рарху** гл҃щи. **мл҃твами твоими вл҃дко. да**

схранена буду ѿ сѣти неприꙗ(знь)ны. *бѣ же реч(но) имѧ еи во кр҃щньи ѡлена. ꙗкоже (и) древнѧꙗ ц҃рцѧ. м҃ти великаго костѧнтина*. **бл҃гсви ю п҃трархъ и ѿпусти ю**.[76]

The emperor, together with the patriarch, baptised her. When [Olga] was enlightened, [she] rejoiced in soul and body. And the patriarch instructed her in the faith, saying, '*Blessed are you among Rus women, for you have loved the light, and abandoned the darkness. The sons of Rus shall bless you to the last generation of your descendants.*' **He taught her about the typicon of the church, and about prayer and fasting, about alms-giving and the maintenance of chastity. She bowed her head**, and like a sponge absorbing water, **she eagerly drank in his teachings. [The princess] bowed before the patriarch, saying, 'Through your prayers, holy father, may I be preserved from the snares of the devil**!' *She was christened Helena, just like the ancient empress, the mother of the great Constantine*. **The patriarch then blessed her and dismissed her**.

A similar combination of liturgical sources is also evident in the passage describing Princess Olga's second meeting with the patriarch prior to her departure for Kiev:

ѡна же хотѧщи домови. **приде къ тпраеарху бл҃гсвньꙗ просѧщи на домъ**. и реч ему людье мои пагани и с҃нъ мои. **дабы мѧ б҃ъ съблюлъ ѿ всѧкого зла**. И реч п҃трархъ **чадо вѣрное во кр҃та крстиласѧ еси и во креста ѡблечесѧ**. *хсъ имать схранити тѧ. ꙗкожс схрани еноха в первыꙗ роды. и потомъ ноꙗ в ковчезѣ. аврама ѿ авимелеха. лота ѿ содомлѧнъ. моисѣꙗ ѿ фараѡна. двда ѿ сао|ула. г҃. ѡтроци ѿ пещи. данила ѿ звѣрии. тако и тѧ избавить. ѿ неприꙗзни. и ѿ сѣтии его*. **блвси ю патреархъ.** и иде с миромъ въ свою зелмю.[77]

Desiring to return home, **she went to the patriarch and requested his blessing** for the journey home. She said to him, 'My people and my son are heathen. **May God protect me from all evil.'** The patriarch replied, '**Child of the faith, you have been baptised into Christ and have put on Christ**. *Christ shall save you, even as he saved Enoch in the early generations, and then Noah in the ark, Abraham from Abimelech, Lot from the Sodomites, Moses from the pharoah, David from Saul, the Three Children from the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the wild beasts. So he will preserve you from the devil and his snares'*. **So the Patriarch blessed her**, and [she] returned in peace to her own country and arrived in Kiev.

The first excerpt begins with reference to a local ecclesiastical practice. By using the specialized term, patriarch, the chronicler concretely connects Princess Olga's baptism to a specific place and liturgical tradition: that of the Great Church in Constantinople, where the patriarch personally baptised neophytes on Theophany, Pentecost, Lazarus Saturday, and

[76] *PVL*, 61, 3–17. [77] *Ibid*., 25–62, 7.

Holy Saturday.[78] Apart from this hierarchical distinction, the patriarch is not characterized by the same individuality that marks the description of the emperor. He is neither named, as is the emperor Tzimiskes, nor is he portrayed as a concrete, personal entity. The patriarch is rather the figure of the liturgical celebrant projected and propagated by the service books.

The next line, 'When Olga was enlightened, she rejoiced in soul and body', likewise expresses important ideas from the initiation sacraments. In the liturgical texts, baptism is called 'enlightenment' (*просвещение*) and linked to the experience of joy. The call to rejoice is repeated in several prayers and hymns during the service, such as the first anointing with oil immediately before baptism, the prayer during the putting on of baptismal garments, and the hymns that follow immediately thereafter. In the theology of Byzantine initiation, the knowledge of God is consistently tied to the emotion of joy, and the princess herself advances this notion a little later in the passage, when she tries to convince Sviatoslav to convert: 'My son, I have known God and I rejoice. If you come to know him, you too will rejoice.'[79]

The phrase 'soul and body' ('душею и телом') punctuates the chronicler's description of the ritual and this is also characteristic of Byzantine liturgical practice. The formula frequently appears in connection with the Eucharist and a variation of it appears in the rubrics for the priest following the initiate's first reception into the catechumenate:

Приходит хотяй креститися к настоятелю и приемлет благословение, и по благословении же предаст его настоятель искусну священнику, ведущему божественная писания, и повелит ему ведати хотящаго креститися душевне и телесне.[80]

The one desiring baptism approaches the rector [of the church] and receives a blessing, and after the blessing the rector directs him to an experienced priest, who knows the divine scriptures, entrusting him to edify the one desiring baptism in soul and body.

Overall, the chroniclers' opening phrase is a tidy summary of the eastern Christian initiation ritual, particularly the few moments before and after the act of triple immersion.

The patriarch's address to Princess Olga following the baptism is also rich with liturgical associations. His words, 'Blessed are you among Rus women', are based on a verse found in one of the most ancient and well-known of Christian hymns, the 'Hail Mary' (*Богородица дево*), or Ave Maria. In medieval Stoudite practice, this hymn served as the dismissal

[78] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 75. [79] *PVL*, 63, 20–23.
[80] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 78.

troparion for the daily vespers service.[81] It also comprised parts of the Gospel reading at matins (Luke 1:39–49, 56) for major feasts of the Mother of God, such as Annunciation and Dormition.[82] Thus, the patriarch's first words to Olga were the very words repeated by the clergy in Kiev most every evening at vespers and at every major liturgical veneration of the Virgin Mary. Once this native liturgical context is restored, it becomes clear that the patriarch's statement carries considerable historical and theological weight. Olga is 'blessed among Rus women' because she is the forebear of Prince Vladimir, the one who converts the Rus to Christianity. The Hail Mary conveys the same notion. The Virgin is 'blessed among women' because she has 'born the saviour of our souls':

Б(д)це дѣво рад8йсѧ • бл҃годатнаѧ мр҃іе • г(с)дь съ тобою • бл҃гословена ты въ женахъ и бл҃гословенъ плодъ чрева твоегѡ • ꙗкѡ сп҃са родила еси д8шъ нашихъ.[83]

Rejoice, O Virgin Mother of God, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For you have born the Saviour of our souls.

Similarly, Olga will be blessed 'by the sons of Rus . . . to the last generation of [her] descendants' because in another ancient hymn, the Magnificat or Song of the Theotokos (*Песнь Богородицы*), Mary prophesies about herself: 'For he has looked upon the lowliness of his handmaiden; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed' (Luke 1:48).

The patriarch addresses Princess Olga as the services address Mary, and then gives religious instruction on five topics: the church typicon, prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and continence. All of these topics are mentioned in the instructions read aloud at the churching ceremony:

О чадо, внимай же глаголю ти: Во Христа крестился еси, во Христа облечеся. Ему же буди всегда угодная творя во вся дни живота твоего, в православной вере твердо пребывая, в добродетелех житие совершая, к духовному отцу послушание и повиновение имея. Никогда же отлучайся церковнаго правила кроме великия нужда, но прилежным тщанием буди всегда упражняяся в молитвах и воздержании, и во время пощения не унывай. Руце простирай к милостыни требующим и ко святым церквам и ко убогой чади елика сила. Правду и любовь имей ко всем человеком.[84]

[81] A. A. Lukashevich, 'Bogoroditsa devo', in *PE* (Moscow, 2009), vol. V, pp. 504–505.
[82] *TAS*, pp. 333, 363. [83] Lukashevich, 'Bogoroditsa devo', pp. 504–505.
[84] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', pp. 92–93.

O child, hear what I say to you: You have been baptised into Christ, and have put on Christ. Perform [the deeds] pleasing to Him all the days of your life, steadfastly remaining in the Orthodox faith, living out your life in virtues, having deference and obedience to your spiritual father. Never deviate from the church rule except in times of grave necessity, but through diligent efforts be ever active in prayer and continence, and in times of repentance and fasting do not despair. Give alms, as much as you are able, to those in need and to the holy churches and to the orphaned. Be honest and loving towards all people.

The first line of this churching text should also sound familiar. It reproduces word for word the patriarch's exhortation to Princess Olga at their second meeting: 'Child of the faith! You have been baptised into Christ and have put on Christ'/ 'чадо вѣрное во кр҇та крстиласѧ еси и во креста ѡблечесѧ'. This phrase can be traced back, of course, to the third chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (3:27). As we saw in Arranz's reconstructed service, however, the apostle's words were appropriated by Byzantine hymnodists and repeated at two points in the initiation rites. They were sung for the first time shortly after the neophytes emerged from the blessed waters and then again when they paraded three times around the holy font. During the liturgical year, moreover, this sacred song replaced the Trisagion hymn at divine liturgy on the holiest days of the church calendar, such as Pascha and Theopany. Thus, the patriarch's words in the chronicle not only fulfilled the specific instructions in the Constantinopolitan service books. They also called to mind the one verse from the baptism service that appeared at climactic moments throughout the year-long liturgical cycle.

There is an interesting liturgiological and philological point to be made here. The order of the initiation rites, as presented in the chronicle, indicates that the instructions from the churching ceremony were pronounced after the baptism and chrismation rituals and not before them, as Arranz believed. One may therefore suppose that this part of the service was performed in eleventh- and twelfth-century Rus in the order in which it actually appeared in the Slavonic church books and not in the order that they were celebrated in Greek in Constantinople. Should such a conjecture prove accurate, then what we have here is a fascinating example of how historical philology can shed new light on the history of liturgy, and how liturgical history can offer new perspectives on the problems of philology. In this case, the chronicle passage not only attests to how the rites of initiation were possibly performed in early Rus but also provides evidence that the authors of the passage were probably not Greek-speaking clerics at the Cathedral of Saint Sophia's, as Shakhmatov and Likhachev have famously speculated. Clerics from that part of the world would almost certainly have known the proper ordering of the

churching ceremony in Constantinople. As a result, it is doubtful that they would have had the patriarch address Olga using words and phrases from that ceremony, as if it were indeed the final service in the initiation rites.

Princess Olga listens to the patriarch's instructions, bowing her head and body toward the prelate, and absorbs his teachings 'like a sponge absorbs water'. This posture reflects the traditional piety of eastern Christian worship, often depicted on icon screens, and it is also prescribed in several places of the baptism service. During the removal of holy chrism, for example, the initiate is instructed to bow his head towards the altar, as the hierarch prays:

Одеяыйся [или одеявшаяся] в Тя, Христа и Бога нашего, Тебе подклони с нами свою главу, егоже сохрани непобедима подвижника пребыти на всуе вражду носящих на него и на ны . . .[85]

Having been clothed in You, O Christ our God, and bowing his head to You with us, do now preserve [him] as an invincible spiritual fighter against all who bring hostility upon him and upon us . . .

Such instructions also help to make sense of the role that blessings play in the passage. When the patriarch blesses Olga at the conclusion of the baptism, and when she actively seeks out his blessing later on, they are not speaking and acting arbitrarily. Rather, they are performing the roles between baptiser and baptised, as presented in the church books. At one place in the services, for instance, the rubrics state that 'the one desiring baptism approaches the primate and receives a blessing'.[86] Likewise, the instructions for the churching rite emphasize that deference and obedience should be shown to one's spiritual superiors at all times.

Another motif from the baptism service that appears in the passage involves Satan, the ancient enemy of mankind. In the chronicle, Princess Olga explicitly asks the patriarch to pray for her so that she may be 'preserved from the snares of the devil'. This notion is found throughout the initiation rites, but it is most pronounced in the rite of exorcism. The last line of the final prayer from the third exorcism is enough to give the overall gist:

. . . избавляюща его от всякаго навета сопротиволежащаго, от сретения лукаваго, от демона полуденнаго, и от мечтаний лукавых.[87]

. . . delivering him from every intrigue of the adversary, from the encounter of the evil one, from the demon of noonday, and from evil imaginations.

[85] *Ibid*., 94. [86] *Ibid*., 80. [87] *Ibid*., 82.

The patriarch promises Olga that Christ will 'deliver her from the snares and nets of the devil' and, in so doing, places her in the company of major figures from the Old Testament, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, David, the three holy youths, and Daniel. These sacred heroes are mentioned in various hymns and canons throughout the year, but the most likely models for the 955 account are found in two services, the Feasts of the Holy Fathers and Forefathers, celebrated in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Like the chronicle passage, the hymns for these feasts include long lists of Old Testament figures and describe how God delivered them from danger:

Праотьць дьньсь сътворѧще памѧтие • въспоимъ христа • избавителѧ • възвеличьшаго ꙗ въ вьсѣхъ ꙗзыцѣхъ • и чюдеса предивьнаꙗ • вѣрно съконьчавъшааго • ꙗко държавьна и сильна . . .[88]

Celebrating the memory of the forefathers today, let us sing and praise Christ, the deliverer, the mighty and powerful one, who has exalted them above all nations, and faithfully performed wondrous miracles . . .

Праотьчьскыи съставъ • праздьнолюбьци придѣте пѣсньми въсхвалимъ • адама праотьца • еноха ноꙗ мелхиседека • авраама иваака и иꙗкова • съ законъмь мосѣꙗ и аарона • иисоуса • самоила и давыда • съ нимиже • исаию иеремию иезикелѧ и даниила • и дъванадесѧте • въкоупѣ илию и елисѣꙗ • и вьсѣхъ захариꙗ и христителѧ • и проповѣдавъшиихъ христа • живота и въскрьсение родоу нашемоу.[89]

Come, lovers of the feasts [of the church], and with songs let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam the forefather, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And those [that came] after the law: Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David; and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve [prophets]; together with Elijah and Elisha, and all, Zachariah and the Baptist, and those who preached Christ, the life and resurrection of our race.

In the eyes of the patriarch, Olga's predicament brings to mind the men of the Old Testament, but the chroniclers balance this comparison with another, more recent, and feminine model. They report that the princess is christened with the name Helena, after the mother of Constantine the Great, a choice that is once again inflected with important liturgical associations.

In the divine services, Saint Helena is treated as a righteous female forebear in the Marian tradition. Like Olga, she too is a convert and the precursor of a powerful political leader, who will convert his people to the true faith. In the hymnography, the Roman empress is praised as

[88] *GMD*, vol. III, p. 8. [89] *Ibid.*, p. 14. See also Sof. 384, 3.2.

a divinely wise woman who abandons the darkness, forsakes idols, builds churches, and attains salvation:

Вѣровавъши къ господоу живоу • бытие подающаага вьсѣмъ мързъкыихъ соуетьныихъ идолъ • мьрть створѧщаꙗ отъложи • слоуженїꙗ • и приꙗтъ радостьно • цьсарьство елено небесьное.[90]

Having believed in the living Lord, who gives being unto all, you cast aside the deadly worship of abominable and vain idols, O Helena, and have joyfully received the heavenly kingdom.

ІАко дивьна любы твоꙗ • и образъ же божествьныи славьнаꙗ елено • женьскаꙗ похвало мѣста бо дошьдъши • иде же прѣчистыꙗ страсти • приꙗтъ владыка вьсѣхъ и съпасъ • църкъвами премоудрыими оукрашaаше поющи • дети благосл[ови] . . .[91]

How wondrous is your love and your divine image, O glorious Helena, the boast of women. For upon coming to the places where the Saviour and Master of all accepted the most pure passion, you adorned them with marvellous churches, singing out, 'Bless [the Lord], O children . . .

The liturgical presentation of Helena, like the chronicle's presentation of Olga, is in some ways patterned after that of the Theotokos. Byzantine hymnography emphasizes that by giving birth to God in the flesh, Mary becomes the unique intercessor between the Creator and His creation. This image of the Virgin is highlighted in the Old Testament readings chanted at vespers on her feast days. In these lections the Mother of God is called the 'house of God' and 'gate of heaven' and is likened to a ladder descending from heaven to earth (Genesis 28:10–17; Ezekiel 43:27–44:4). Such images are understood as a prefiguring of the incarnation of Christ in his mother's womb. Mary is the medium, the ladder and gate, through which God united Himself to the materials of the created universe. Building on this liturgical teaching, later generations of hymn writers portrayed Saint Helena as a type of 'Byzantine Mary', a holy mother whose womb was blessed because it carried Constantine:

Воистинну блаженно чрево и освященна утроба, тебе носившая, царю мировожделенне, христианов радосте, Константине Боговенчанне . . .[92]

Truly blessed is the belly and sanctified is the womb that carried you, O peace-loving emperor, the joy of Christians, O divinely anointed Constantine . . .

The same liturgical model applies to Princess Olga in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. She is depicted as a type of 'Slavic Mary' because through her seed, Prince Vladimir, Christian salvation will come to the land of Rus.

[90] Sin. 166, 128.1. [91] *Ibid.*, 129.2 [92] *Meneia. Mai* (Moscow, 2002), p. 344.

In the final analysis, therefore, the tale of Princess Olga's baptism is a complex and creative liturgical rendering of an unrecorded event in the history of Rus. The narrative action – what actually happens, what the patriarch and princess do – derives from the prayers, hymnography, and rubrics of the sacraments of initiation. Olga is baptised by the patriarch (rubrics); she is enlightened and rejoices in body and soul (baptism and chrismation); she is given basic instruction in the faith (churching); she behaves piously and respectfully towards the patriarch, asking his blessing and bowing her head (renunciation of heresies, churching); and she twice asks to be saved from the devil and 'every evil' (reception into the catechumenate, exorcism). The theology of Olga's conversion, that is, what it means both for her and her people, is provided by feasts in the Menaion. Like Mary, Saint Helena, and other righteous women before her, the princess' faithfulness prefigures a major event in the history of salvation: the mass baptism of Rus in the Dnieper River in the year 988.

THE DAWN BEFORE THE SUNRISE

Olga's typological role in the conversion story is developed further in the passage recounting her death and burial. Here again, the chroniclers construct her saintly side using a series of highly allusive phrases and citations, which they borrow from three church books. In the selection below, italics signify text from the Menaion, emboldened font represents text from the Euchologion, and underlining denotes materials from the Prophetologion (*Parimeinik*), or Old Testament lectionary:

си быс предътекущиꙗ кртсьꙗньстѣи и. аки деньица предъ сл҃нцмь. и акі зорѧ предъ свѣтомъ. си бо сьѧше аки луна в нощи. тако и си в невѣрныхъ чл҃вцхъ свѣтѧщесѧ. аки бисеръ в калѣ. **кальни бо бѣша грѣх. не ѡмовени крщ҃нмь ст҃мь. си бо ѡмысѧ упѣлью ст҃ою. и совлече сѧ грѣховною ѡдеже въ. ветхаго чл҃вка адама. и въ новыи адамъ ѡблечесѧ еже есть хсъ**. мы же рцѣмъ к неи. *радисѧ руское познанье. къ б҃у начатокъ примиренью примирсныо быхомъ. си первое вниде в цртсво нбсное ѿ руси. сию бо хвалѧт рустие сн҃ве. аки началницю. ибо по смр҃ти молѧше б҃а за русь.* прв҃днхъ бо д҃ша не оумирают. ꙗкоже реч соломанъ. Похвала првднму възвеселѧтсѧ людье. бссмртье бо есть памѧть его. ꙗко ѿ б҃а познаваетсѧ и ѿ чл҃вкъ. се бо вси чл҃вци прославлѧють видѧща лѧжащаꙗ в тѣлѣ на многа лѣт. реч бо пррк҃ъ прославлѧющаꙗ мѧ прославлю. ѡ сѧковых бо дв҃дъ гл҃ше в памѧт [вечноую будет] прв҃днкъ. ѿ слуха зла не оубоитсѧ. готово ср҃це его оуповати гса. оутвердисѧ ср҃це его и не подвижетсѧ. соломанъ бо реч прв҃днци въ вѣки жиоуть и ѿ гса мьзда имь есть. и строенье ѿ вышнѧго. сего рад приимуть ц҃рствие красотѣ. и вѣнець добротѣ ѿ руки гснѧ. ꙗко десницею покрыеть ꙗ. и мышцею защитить ꙗ.

защитить бо есть сию блж҃ну вольгу. ѿ противника и супостата дьꙗвола.[93]

[Olga] was the forerunner of Christianity, like the dayspring before the sun and the dawn before the sunrise, she shone like the moon by night. Thus she was radiant among the infidels like a pearl in the mire, **since the people were unclean, and not yet purified of their sin by holy baptism. But she herself was cleansed by this sacred purification. She put off the sinful garments of the old Adam and was clad in the new Adam, which is Christ.** Thus, we say to her: *rejoice, Rus knowledge of God, the beginning of reconciliation. She was the first from Rus to enter the kingdom of heaven, and the sons of Rus therefore praise her as their leader, because since her death she has prayed to God for Rus.* For the souls of the righteous do not perish, as Solomon has said. 'The nations rejoice in praise of the righteous man, for his memory is immortal, since it is acknowledged by both God and the people.' For all people glorify her, as they behold her lying there in the body for many years. As the prophet has said, 'I will glorify them that glorify me.' Of such persons David also said, 'In eternal memory shall the righteous be, he shall not fear evil tidings. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord, his heart is fixed and shall not be moved.' And Solomon said, 'The righteous live forever, and they have reward from the Lord and grace from the Most High. Therefore, they shall receive the kingdom of beauty, and the crown of goodness from the hand of the Lord. For with his right hand will he cover them and with his arm will he protect them.' *For he protected this blessed Olga from the devil, the adversary and foe.*

The opening lines of this excerpt are dense with liturgical connotations and must be carefully parsed. They contain precise epithets from very specific liturgical feasts, which function to place the princess within a long and distinguished line of righteous men and women, chosen by God to prepare the way for the saviour of the world.

The greatest of these, and indeed 'the greatest born of a woman', was Saint John the Baptist. The princess is therefore identified with this sacred figure from the very start: Olga is *pred"tekushchiia* because in the Byzantine liturgical tradition Saint John is *predtecha*, or 'forerunner'. This designation is used in the titles for six of the seven feasts commemorating the baptist during the liturgical year, and it also appears regularly in the hymnography. The princess is referred to as the 'dayspring before the sun' and 'dawn before the sunrise' for similar reasons. The Slavonic word *dennitsa* (*денница*) means 'morning star' or 'dawn', and the hymnography for Saint John repeatedly refers to him as a 'star' (*звезда*), 'the dawn' (*заря*), or 'the dayspring from on high' (*заря, восток свыше*), another term for the dawn, indicating the particular point on the horizon where the sun rises. The sixth ode of the canon chanted at matins during the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John is representative:

[93] *PVL*, 68, 7–69, 7.

Дн(с)ь поустыньныихъ храбръ і҃ѡ • ражѧеть сѧ, покаıанию проповѣдатель • и бл҃годати съвѣдѣтель истиньнъ прд҃теча словоу • и прѣдъсвѣтъмь сиıающиıа звѣзда.[94]

Today the citizen of the desert, John, is born: the preacher of repentance, the true witness of grace, the forerunner of the Word, and the shining star before the light.

Преже слн҃ца текъшаго • х҃а б҃а нашего • і҃ѡ славьнааго • ıако звѣздоу прд҃тчю и стьзѧ оуправль • и б҃а познавъша достоино хвалимъ.[95]

We worthily hymn the glorious forerunner John, who appeared like a star before the sun, Christ our God, and who having known God, has prepared the path.

The same sort of imagery also occurs in the akathist to the Mother of God, when the congregation calls out to Mary: 'Rejoice, star showing forth the sun'/ 'р(д)аисѧ звѣздо ıавлѧющи сълнце'.[96] It appears as well in the ninth ode of the canon for the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos by Saint Anna:

Іако прѣвелицѣи дъвѣ звѣздѣ изнесла еста • зарю вьсесвѣтьлоую • ıаже въсиıаеть великааго • сълньца мирови • тѣмь хвалимъ и славимъ • иоакима же и анноу богомоудроую.[97]

Like the two greatest stars, we praise and glorify Joachim and the godly wise Anna, who have brought forth the all-enlightening dawn, which shines forth the great Sun to the world.

Nowhere does the term *dennista* appear more frequently, however, than in the chants and readings for the Nativity of Christ. It is mentioned over half a dozen times in the typicon and also figures prominently in the hymnography:

Приде въплъщьсѧ, х҃ъ б҃ъ нашь • и-чрева, иже из оц҃а • прѣже дьньница раждаеть • обладаниıа же държа • прѣчистыхъ силъ • въ ıасльхъ скотиıахъ възлежить • рѧбы повитъ • раздрѣши же многоплетуны пленница прѣгрѣниıа.[98]

Christ our God has come in the flesh from the womb, begotten from the Father before the morning star. He who rules the heavenly hosts now lies in a manger of dumb beasts. He who loosens the tangled knots of sin is now wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The princess is compared to yet another celestial body in the second sentence of the panegyric, where she is said to shine 'like the moon by night'. Once more, the metaphor alludes to her relationship to Vladimir

[94] Sin. 895, 125.1. [95] *Ibid*.,126.1. [96] *Ibid*., 221.2 [97] *GMD*, vol. II, p. 59.
[98] *Il'ina Kniga, Rukopis'*, RGADA, Tip. 131, ed. V. B. Krysko (Moscow, 2005), p. 388.

and very probably derives from the Byzantine church books. At the Feast of the Conception of Saint John, for instance, Saint Elisabeth is twice compared to the moon:

Лоунѣ елисавеѳь • примѣшева сѧ многосвѣтьно ꙗко сл҃нце • захариꙗ свѣтьлыи свѣтельникъ свѣта роди • свьтѧща намъ • соущимъ въ стра(ст)хь • дьрьжимомъ лютѣ.[99]

Zechariah, like unto the sun, radiantly cleaved unto Elizabeth, the moon, and begat the light-bearing lamp of the light, which shines upon us who are cruelly held in the darkness of passions.

Лоуна елисавеѳи • въноутрь носѧщи звѣздѧ бж҃ствьнаго пр҃дчоу • поклони сꙗ свѣтлоу облакоу мариа • сл҃нца носѧщоумоу х҃а • въплъщаема ис тебе сп҃сениѧ ради нашего.[100]

Elizabeth, the moon, bearing within herself the star, the divine forerunner, honours Mary, the radiant cloud, who carries Christ-the-sun, who was incarnate [from her] for the sake of our salvation.

A similar poetic device, referring to a male sun and female moon, is also found in the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena:

Дроузѣ и показалъ еси свѣтилѣ дъвѣ ѧко сълньце и лоу(н) • костѧнтина и еленоу вышьнии • кр(с)тъ лоуча поущающа • имиже приведе коньца земьныꙗ къ разуму • дароуѧ и намъ велию мл(с)ть.[101]

You, O Most High, have revealed two lights, other than the sun and moon, Constantine and Helena, who have received the rays from the cross, and with [those rays] have led the ends of the earth to knowledge, granting us great mercy.

As these liturgical texts make clear, the first twenty-one words of Olga's panegyric were hardly selected at random. The chroniclers chose highly suggestive terms from a series of services dedicated to the conception and birth of Saint John, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus Christ, in order to cast the princess in a distinctive and deeply revered typological mould.

The next few phrases emphasize Olga's spiritual purity. She is praised for 'washing away the filth of her sins by holy baptism, putting off the Old Adam and putting on the new Adam, which is Christ'. This statement is a loose paraphrase of the epistle reading for the 'Commemoration of the Dead' (1 Corinthians 15:42–49), a very ancient reading found as early as the Euchologium Sinaiticum, the ninth-century Glagolitic Euchologion discovered at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in 1975.[102] The liturgical inference here is simple enough. In a passage about the passing

[99] *MSON*, vol. I, p. 186. [100] *Ibid*. [101] Sin. 166, 123.2–124.1.

[102] M. Baker, 'The New Testament Lections in the Euchologium Sinaiticum', *Polata Knigopisnaiia*, 25–26 (1994), pp. 120–69.

of a devout Christian, the chronicler draws on materials from the eastern Christian ceremony for commemorating the dead. There is still another possible liturgical source for this phrase, however, and that is the great water blessing, the service of sanctification for the water used during baptisms and on the feast of Theophany. As documented above, one prayer from that service asks God to bless the baptismal waters so that the neophyte may 'put off the old man' and be clothed in the new.

In the next syntactic units, the chronicler turns away from the Euchologion and searches for inspiration once more in the Menaion. The short phrase, 'rejoice, Rus knowledge of God, the beginning of reconciliation', is another example of deeply encoded language, pointing beyond itself to the liturgical feasts for holy forebears and forerunners. The call to rejoice naturally brings to mind the refrains of the akathist for the Mother of God, whilst the notion that Olga marks the beginning of the salvation of Rus is once again reminiscent of the hymnography associated with the conception and birth of major sacred heroes. In the troparion for the Feast of the Annunciation cited earlier, for example, the choir chanted that 'Today is the beginning of our salvation . . . rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with you!'[103] The same idea was also conveyed at the Feast of the Conception of the Theotokos:

Съпасению вьсѣмъ начало • облаженыи иакимъ и анна славьнаꙗ • чистоу и непорочьноу • и пречьстьноу богородицию родиста • богочьстиꙗ же се • въсприимъша въздание.[104]

The beginning of the salvation of all, the blessed Joachim and glorious Anna, give birth to the pure and undefiled and most honourable Mother of God, [for which] they received the reward of godliness.

It was likewise expressed at the conclusion of the first canon for the feast of the Nativity of St John:

Тѧ б҃жие въмѣстилище • разоумьноую лѣствицю • еюже съниде б҃ъ • и въобрази сѧ въ наше • на н҃бса възвелъ ес Ть • вси оубо • ꙗко сп҃сению начатъкъ похвалимъ.[105]

As the beginning of our salvation, we praise you, who are the habitation of God and the noetic ladder whereby God has descended, taking our form, and leading our nature up to the heavens.

The lines coming after these continue to portray Princess Olga as a forerunner. This time she is the first of the Rus to enter heaven, the one who prepares the way for her people to follow. The passage's continuity with the 955 account is particularly striking. The patriarch's

[103] *TAS*, p. 333. [104] *GMD*, vol. II, p. 96. [105] Sin. 895,122.2–123.1.

prophecy at Olga's baptism that she will be 'blessed by Rus sons until the last generation of her grandchildren' is fulfilled, for she is 'praised by Rus sons as the leader [or founder]' of Christianity in her native land. The masculine form of this term, *nachal'nik*, is used in the liturgical services to describe Christ, who is called the 'leader of our salvation' (*начальник спасения*). Moreover, the theological idea that Princess Olga continues to pray to God for Rus even after her death reflects the traditional belief that the saints in heaven continually pray for the salvation of those on earth. This sentiment is one of the most common tropes in Menaion hymnography, and it is particularly common in the genre of stichera, where saints are regularly imagined as praying for the salvation of the souls of the faithful still on earth.

The scriptural interpolations that conclude the 969 entry are typical of the way that Sacred Writ is used in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. On the surface, the readings appear to be excerpts from the Book of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon. In the chronicler's monastic world, however, these readings did not represent biblical, so much as liturgical sources. The selections are in fact citations and paraphrases from the Prophetologion (*Parimeinik*), the book containing the Old Testament readings, or lectionary, for the most important feasts of the liturgical year. In the 969 chronicle account, three of the four citations from this church book can be traced back to two feasts. The line that opens the scriptural composite and the line that concludes it correspond to the readings from the Feast of All Saints. Consider the third and final lection read aloud at vespers for that celebration:

ѿ прѣ(м) • соломо(н) • Правьдници въ вѣкы живоуть • и ѿ г(с)а мьзда имъ и строение ѿ вышнѧ(а)го • сего ради приим8ть ц(с)рствие красотѣ • и вѣньць добротѣ • ѿ рукы г(с)нѧ • ꙗко десницею покрыеть ꙗ • и мышъцею защитить ꙗ . . .[106]

From the Wisdom of Solomon. The righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore, they shall receive a kingdom of beauty, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand. For with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them . . .

This matches nearly exactly the final interpolation in the panegyric. Similarly, the second interpolation is a precise citation of the opening lines from the third reading at vespers for the Feast of Saint John Chrysostom, the illustrious fourth-century patriarch of Constantinople:

[106] *Zakhariiskii parimeinik,* RNB, Q.p.I. 13, 227.2, ed. B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=93729005 (accessed March 2018).

ѿ премоу(д) • соло • чь(т) • Похвала правьдьномоу • възвеселѧтьсѧ людие • бесъмьртие въ памѧть его есть • ꙗко ѿ ба познаетьсѧ и ѿ чл҃вкъ . . .[107]

From the Wisdom of Solomon. When the righteous [man] is praised, the people rejoice. His memory is immortal, since it is known both by God and the people . . .

The third interpolation, attributed to the prophet David, is perhaps the most multivalent liturgical association in the entire passage. Empirically, the text reproduces the communion verse for the Feast of the Nativity of Saint John (Psalm 112:6–8), making it consistent with the chronicler's earlier treatment of Princess Olga in the passage.[108] The term 'memory eternal' (*вечная память*), moreover, is the climactic phrase sung during a modern-day eastern Christian requiem, or *panikhida* (*панихида*). This phrase is traditionally used to remember the faithful departed from this life, but not the saints. During the contemporary canonization service, 'Memory eternal' is sung one final time before the momentous transition to 'We magnify' (*величание*), the hymn used to praise recognized saints. One of the only exceptions to this provision in all of the hymnography of the eastern church is none other than the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena. At their festival, the emperor and empress continue to be praised, even into the present day, with the formula now used for deceased members of the lay community.

One should not imagine, however, that such a practice connoted a lack of status on their part, as if they were not genuine saints. On the contrary, in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the term 'memory eternal' was reserved exclusively for the commemoration of highly esteemed emperors and church dignitaries, who defended the true faith against iconoclasm. These men and women were celebrated every year on the first Sunday of Great Lent at the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, a festival founded to celebrate the restoration of icon veneration in 843.[109] The modern service for Saints Constantine and Helena therefore appears to preserve a very ancient practice, which developed to memorialize saints of especially high political and moral standing. As noted above, Saint Helena is one of the principal liturgical models for Princess Olga, and so it is plausible that the chroniclers included this memorable phrase in her panegyric in order to signal that she should be accorded similar status. Should this be true, then the princess is simultaneously linked to three different liturgical myths, those of John the Forerunner, the empress

[107] *Ibid.*, 251.1–2. [108] *TAS*, pp. 348–49.
[109] A. A. Lukashevich, 'Vechnaia Pamiat'', in *PE* (Moscow, 2004), vol. VII, p. 93. On the history of the iconoclast controversy, see L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 69–447.

Helena, and the Triumph of Orthodoxy, all in a single phrase from psalm 112.

By now it should be clear that these citations were drawn from the specific liturgical readings of the Byzantine lectionary system and were not simply a selection from the Bible as a whole. As such, they conveyed a variety of meanings that are utterly lost on modern readers, who are unfamiliar with the way that Holy Writ was used at liturgy. When a medieval churchman leafed through the pages of the chronicle and arrived at the panegyric, he surely recognized that it was composed in order to advance a rather specific theological and political agenda. In this instance, in a single scriptural composite, Princess Olga was added to the communion of saints (All Saints) and simultaneously presented as a Christian forerunner (Nativity of Saint John), enlightener (Saint John Chrysostom), defender of the true faith (Triumph of Orthodoxy), and holy royal mother (Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena). Thus, far from being a simple biblical tribute, the concluding lines of the 955 *pokhvala* were in fact signalling to medieval readers the proper station that the princess should occupy in the hierarchy of saints. The citations from the *Parimeinik* were not merely the source of otherwise unavailable biblical texts: they were themselves important emblems of liturgical authority. The chroniclers and their audience knew from which feasts the citations were selected, and so they became yet another way to communicate typological rank. By praising the princess with the words of these lections, the scribes were making a clear statement about her place in the history of Rus. In their eyes, Olga was a saint and she therefore deserved to be praised using the same readings, the same markers of liturgical prestige, which were used for her predecessors on their feast days.

In summary, this exercise in liturgical scrutiny has established that the chroniclers drew extensively on the services of the Byzantine rite in order to create the 955 and 969 year entries. They crafted a story about a baptism from the prayers, hymns, and rubrics of the baptism service itself. They imagined a holy mother modelled on the liturgical songs and readings for the Mother of God and other righteous forebears. They created a native forerunner based on the hymnography for Saint John the Baptist. As we have seen, parts of these passages were densely, physically composed from liturgical components, which were arranged in such a way as to make the local Kievan past conform to the Byzantine liturgical past. The folk history of the Rurikid dynasty, with its distinguished line of pagan warriors, offered the chroniclers little in the way of Christian sanctity, and so they were forced to collapse the traditional intergenerational back story into a single character. If the liturgical paradigm was to play out in

the history of Rus as it had in the history of Israel and the Roman Empire, then the princess could not remain merely a clever avenger or pious convert. She had to assume multiple sacred roles for the sake of her people. She had to become not only the Slavic Mary, but also the Slavic Forerunner. She had to be the first to enter the baptismal waters and the first to pass through the gates of heaven. Joachim and Anna had brought forth the Virgin, John had made straight the path for Christ, Helena had preceded Constantine, and now Olga had prepared the way for Vladimir. The stage was therefore set for a saviour figure, a 'new Constantine', to appear in the land of Rus and lead his people into the kingdom of heaven.

Chapter 5

A NEW CONSTANTINE IN THE NORTH: *Prince Vladimir and the Baptism of Rus*

The chronicle's biography of Prince Vladimir spanned a period of nearly fifty years. His reign was remembered reverently, as a period of religious transformation, though that did not prevent the chroniclers from divulging some of the more unsavoury details of his prodigal youth. A great sinner made for a great convert, after all, and the bookmen in Kiev did not shy away from recounting the deeds of Vladimir as a pagan warrior, in the years before his conversion. I have found it beneficial to imitate these medieval bookmen, moreover, when discussing the liturgical origins of their text. For unless I recount the whole story, and describe the sinner as well as the saint, then the liturgical underpinnings of the narrative may very well remain elusive. In the pages that follow, I shall therefore set forth the entirety of Vladimir's career in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, so that readers may more easily understand its connection to the services of the Byzantine rite.

Prince Vladimir, the son of Sviatoslav, made his debut in the annals in somewhat straitened circumstances. While still an adolescent in Kiev, his homeland was invaded by a tribe of Turkic nomads from the Eurasian steppe.

В лѣт ѕ҃.у҃.о҃ѕ. Придоша печенѣзи на руску землю первое. а с҃тославъ бѧше переꙗславци. и затворисѧ волга въ градѣ. со оунуки своими ꙗрополкомъ. и ѡльгомъ. и володимеромъ въ градѣ киевѣ. и ѡступиша градъ в силѣ велицѣ.[1]

In the year 6476 (968). The Pechenegs invaded Rus for the first time, while Sviatoslav was at Pereiaslavets. So Olga shut herself up in the city of Kiev with her grandsons, Iaropolk, Oleg, and Vladimir. And [the nomads] besieged the city with a great multitude.

[1] *PVL*, 65, 19–24.

Vladimir and his brothers were eventually freed in a daring rescue attempt staged by one of their father's generals. Nothing more was heard from the young prince until 970, when Sviatoslav appointed him to rule in Novgorod, the most ancient city in the land of Rus, on the banks of Lake Ilmen. Two years later, the elder ruler was killed while attempting to navigate the river ways back to Kiev, following a successful campaign against the Byzantines.

Поиде с҇тославъ в пороги. и нападе на нь куря князь печенѣжьскии. и оубиша с҇тослава. взяша главу его. и во лбѣ его. съдѣлаша чашю. ѡковаше лобъ его. и пьюху по немь.[2]

Sviatoslav approached the rapids and Kuria, prince of the Pechenegs, attacked him, and they killed Sviatoslav. They took his head and made a cup out of it, overlaying his forehead with gold, and they drank from it.

With their father's head serving as a gilded drinking vessel, the supreme rank among Rus princes fell to Iaropolk, the oldest of the three sons. He began without incident to rule in Kiev, but soon a blood feud sprang up among the brothers. In 976, following a hunting dispute, Iaropolk and Oleg came to blows and the younger brother perished in the skirmish. Fearing for his life, Vladimir fled abroad to Scandinavia and assembled an army of Varangians. Two years later, he sailed back to Rus, retook Novgorod, and prepared to march against his brother in Kiev. War was not the only matter on Vladimir's mind at this time, however. Just prior to launching the campaign, Vladimir sent word to the ruler of Polotsk that he wished to marry his daughter, Rogneda. The young woman haughtily replied that she would not 'draw off the boots of a slave's son' and expressed a wish to marry Iaropolk instead.[3] Infuriated by her rejection, the scorned prince attacked the city, slaughtered the ruling family, and forced Rogneda to become his wife.

Vladimir continued to march southwards and arrived at the gates of Kiev. His elder brother declined to meet him in battle, however, and a siege ensued. Vladimir eventually convinced one of Iaropolk's most trusted military advisers, a man named Blud, that he should betray his prince. The traitorous general persuaded Iaropolk to meet with his brother and make peace. But the proposed summit turned out to be a trap.

и приде ꙗрополкъ къ володимеру. ꙗко полѣзе въ двери. и подъꙗста и два варяга мечьми подъ пазусѣ. блудъ же затвори двери. и не да по немъ ити своимъ. и тако убьенъ быс ꙗрополкъ.[4]

[2] *PVL*, 74, 3–7. [3] *PVL*, 76, 1–2. [4] *PVL*, 78, 11–15.

Iaropolk came to Vladimir, and as he entered the door, two Varangians stabbed him in the breast with their swords. Blud then shut the doors [behind Iaropolk], so that his men could not follow him. And thus Iaropolk was slain.

With both of his brothers now dead, Vladimir began to reign alone in Kiev. He took for himself Iaropolk's wife, a former nun, and she bore him a son named Sviatopolk. The prince also constructed idols on the hills surrounding Kiev, a practice the chronicler strongly condemned, even as he hinted at the changes to come:

жрѧху имъ наричюще ꙗ б҃ы. привожаху с҃ны своꙗ и дъщери. и жрѧху бѣсомъ. ѡсквернѧху землю теребами своими. и ѡскверни сѧ кровьми землѧ руска. и холмо тъ. но прбл҃гии б҃ъ не хотѧ смр҃ти грѣшникомъ. на томъ холмѣ ныне цр҃ки стоить. ст҃го василья есть. (ꙗ)коже послѣди скажемъ.[5]

The people sacrificed to them, calling them gods. They brought their sons and daughters and sacrificed [them] to demons. They desecrated the earth with their offerings. And the land of Rus and the hill were defiled with blood. But the gracious God desires not the death of sinners. Upon that hill now stands the church of Saint Basil, as we shall later narrate.

The second half of the 980 passage focused on Prince Vladimir's prodigal lifestyle, particularly his sexual appetite:

и бѣ же володимеръ побѣженъ похотью женьскою . . . а наложьниць бѣ оу него .т҃. вышегородѣ. а .т҃. в болгарѣх. а .с҃. на берестовѣ . . . и бѣ несытъ блуда приводѧ к собѣ мужьски жены. и дв҃цѣ растьлѧꙗ. бѣ бо женолюбець. ꙗкоже и соломанъ. бѣ бо рече оу соломана женъ .ѱ҃. а наложниць .т҃.[6]

Vladimir was overcome by lust for women . . . He had three hundred concubines at Vyshgorod, three hundred at Belgorod, and two hundred at Berestovo . . . He was insatiable in fornication, taking for himself married women and violating virgins. For he was a lover of women like unto Solomon. For it is said that Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

The prince's bad behaviour recurred in the 983 chronicle passage, also known as the Tale of the Varangian Martyrs. This short hagiographical entry recounted the martyrdom of two Vikings, a father and son, instigated by Vladimir and his boyars following a military victory. In the passage, the prince and his people cast lots for a youth and a maiden to sacrifice to the gods. The lot fell on the son of a Varangian, a Christian, who steadfastly refused to hand over his son:

[5] *PVL*, 79, 15–22. [6] *PVL*, 80, 6–13.

и реч варѧгъ не суть бо б҃зи на древо. днсь есть. а оутро изъгнееть не ꙗдѧть бо ни пьют. ни молвѧт но суть дѣлани руками в деревѣ. а б҃ъ есть единъ емуже служат грьци. и кланѧютсѧ иже створилъ н҃бо и землю. звѣзды. и луну. и сл҃нце. и чл҃вка далъ есть ему жїт на земли. а си б҃зи что сдѣлаша. сами дѣлани суть не дамъ с҃на своего бѣсомъ.

The Varangian said, ‘These are not gods, but wood. Today it exists, and in the morning, it will rot away. [These gods] do not eat, or drink, or speak, but they are made by hands out of wood. But God is one and the Greeks serve and worship him, for he has made heaven and earth, the stars, and the moon, and the sun, and mankind, and has granted him life upon earth. But what have these gods created? They are themselves made. I will not give up my son to demons.’

An angry mob subsequently stormed the Varangian’s estate and murdered both father and son. The chronicler bemoaned the violence of these ‘ignorant pagans’ but praised the faith of the persecuted foreigners, ‘who have received the heavenly crown with the holy martyrs and the just’.[7]

The next two chronicle entries depict Vladimir making war and collecting tribute. Yet religious themes take centre stage once again in 986, when the grand prince is suddenly represented as exhibiting a keen interest in the doctrine and worship of other lands. Proselytes from the three major monotheistic traditions travelled to Kiev and presented their respective faiths before the court. The first to arrive were Bulgar Muslims.

и реч володимеръ како есть вѣра ваша. ѡни же рѣша вѣруемъ б҃у. а бохмитъ ны оучить гл҃ѧ. ѡбрѣзати оуды таиныꙗ и свинины не ꙗсти. вина не пити. а по смр҃ти же реч со. женами похоть творити … володимеръ же слоушаше хъ. бѣ бо самъ любѧ жены. и блуженье многое. послушаше сладко. но се ему бѣ нелюбо. обрѣзанье оудовъ. и ѡ неꙗденьи мѧсъ свиныхъ. а ѡ питьи ѡтинудь. рька руси есть веселье итье. не можемъ бес того быти.

And Vladimir said, ‘What is your faith?’ They answered, ‘We believe in God and Mohammed teaches us to practice circumcision, to not eat pork, and to not drink wine. But after death, he said, [they] will satisfy [their] lusts with women … Vladimir listened to them with pleasure, for he was himself a lover of women and great indulgence, but circumcision and abstinence from pork were disagreeable to him. Concerning drinking, he said, ‘For the Rus there is joy in drinking. We cannot be without it.’

The next missionaries were from the Pope of Rome. They began to describe their beliefs and fasting practices, but Vladimir abruptly dismissed them, adding only that his ancestors ‘accepted no such principles’.[8] Jewish preachers from Khazaria were the next to speak, and they also failed to

[7] *PVL*, 83, 23–25. [8] *PVL*, 85, 18–19.

impress the barbarian prince. Finally, a Byzantine philosopher appeared before the Kievan court. He sharply criticized the teachings of the other delegates and briefly recounted the events of the incarnation and Crucifixion.

реч же володимеръ. то что ради сниде б҃ъ на землю. и страсть такою приꙗ. ѿвѣщав же философъ реч. аще хощеши послушати да ска ти из начала. же реч послушаю рад.

Vladimir said, 'Why did God come down to earth and accept such a passion?' The philosopher then answered and said, 'If you wish to hear, then I shall tell you from the beginning.' [Vladimir] said, 'I will listen gladly.'

In a section of the chronicle known as the 'philosopher's speech', the representative responded with an extensive exposition of the Old and New Testaments. He recounted to Prince Vladimir the history of the world from its beginning and concluded by showing him a curtain depicting the last judgement, with the righteous going to their bliss in paradise on the right side and sinners on their way to torment on the left.

володимеръ е вздохнувъ реч добро симъ ѡ десную. горе же симъ ѡ шююю. ѡнъ же реч аще хощеши ѡ десную съ прв҃днми стат. то крстисѧ. володимеръ же положи на ср҃ци своемъ. рекъ пожду и еще мало. хотѧ испытати ѡ всѣх вѣрахъ. володимеръ же сему дары многи вдавъ. ѿпусти и с ч(сть)ю великою.[9]

Vladimir sighed and said, 'Happy are they on the right, but woe to those on the left.' [The philosopher] replied, 'If you wish to [stand] on the right with the righteous, then be baptised.' Vladimir took this to heart and said, 'I will wait a little longer.' For he wished to investigate all the faiths. Vladimir then gave [the philosopher] many gifts and dismissed him with great honour.

The prince launched this religious investigation in the annals for 987. He first consulted with his boyars, who counselled him to 'test the services of each land and how they worship God'.[10] Vladimir heeded their advice and sent off 'ten good and wise men' to inspect the religious rituals of the Muslim Bulgars, the Germans loyal to Rome, and the 'Greeks' in Constantinople.[11] Little attention is given to the first two expeditions, but the third is described in sumptuous detail. The emissaries arrived in the Imperial City, and the emperor ordered the patriarch to celebrate the divine services, 'so that the Rus might behold the glory of our God'.

[9] *PVL*, 106, 7–13. [10] *PVL*, 107, 5–6. [11] *Ibid.*, 9–14.

си слышавъ патреархъ повелѣ создати крилосъ. по ѡбычаю створиша прз҃дникъ. и кадила вожьгоша. пѣньꙗ и лики съставиша. и иде с ними в цр҃квь. и поставиша ꙗ на пространьнѣ (м)ѣстѣ. показающе красоту цр҃квную. пѣньꙗ и сл(ужб)ы архиерѣиски престоꙗнье дьꙗконъ. сказа(ющ)е имъ служенье б҃а своего. ѡни же во изумѣньи бывше оудивившес похвалиша службу ихъ.[12]

When [the patriarch] heard this, he ordered the clergy to assemble, and they celebrated the feast, as was their custom. They lit the censors and the choirs sang hymns. [The emperor] went with them into church and placed them in a wide space. He showed them the beauty of the church, the singing, and the archiepiscopal services, and the ministry of the deacons, and explained to them the service of his God. [The Rus] were amazed and in wonder they praised their service.

The emissaries returned to Rus and reported their findings to Vladimir. They began by ridiculing the rites of the Bulgars and Germans, but their tone changed drastically when they related their experience in Constantinople.

и придохо же въ греки и вед(одша ны) идеже служать б҃у своему. и не свѣмы (на нб҃ѣ) ли есмы были. ли на земли. нѣс (бо на зем)ли такаго вида. ли красоты такоꙗ. и не до(оумѣ)емъ бо сказати токмо то вѣмы. ꙗко ѡнъдѣ б҃ъ (с чл҃вк) и пребываеть. и есть служба их паче всѣхъ странъ. мы оубо не можемъ забыти красоты тоꙗ.[13]

Then we went to the Greeks, and they led us to [the place where] they serve their God. And we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendour or beauty, and we are unable to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and that their service is better than [those] of all other lands. For we cannot forget that beauty.

The boyars unanimously endorsed the Byzantine faith and reminded the prince that it had also been adopted by his grandmother Olga, 'the wisest of all people'.[14] Vladimir asked his boyars where he should be baptised, and they answered that the decision was up to him.

At this point, the chronicle text for 987 abruptly ends and the entry for the year 988 begins. The reader learns that Prince Vladimir was still unbaptised and had resumed campaigning with his army. The target this time was Cherson, a Byzantine outpost on the Black Sea, some 350 miles south of Kiev. The prince and his forces found themselves mired in a protracted military siege and they were beginning to grow impatient.

[12] *Ibid.*, 23–108, 1. [13] *PVL*, 108, 16–23. [14] *Ibid.*, 27–28.

и мужь корсунѧнинъ стрѣли имѧнемъ настасъ. напсавъ сице на стрѣлѣ. кладѧзи юже суть за тобою ѿ въстока. ис того вода идеть по трубѣ. копавъ переими. володимеръ же се слышавъ. возрѣвъ на нбо реч. аще се сѧ сбудет. и самъ сѧ кр҃щю.[15]

Then a man of Cherson named Anastasius shot an arrow [into the Rus camp] on which he had written: 'There are wells behind you to the east. Dig down and cut off the one from which water flows in pipes.' When Vladimir heard this, he raised his eyes to heaven and said, 'If this proves true, I will be baptised.'

Shortly thereafter, the flow of water into Cherson was stopped, the inhabitants surrendered, and Vladimir and his retinue entered the city. The victorious prince subsequently sent a message to the emperors Basil and Constantine, threatening a similar siege of Constantinople unless their sister were given to him in marriage. The emperors answer that they were unable to marry her to a pagan, but if he were willing to be baptised, he would gain her as a wife, inherit the kingdom of God, and be their companion in the faith. Prince Vladimir agreed to their request, acknowledging that he had tested their religion and found their liturgical services especially pleasing. After continued negotiations, the emperors sent their sister, Princess Anna, and a cohort of priests to Cherson for the baptism of her husband-to-be. The princess was reluctant to leave, suggesting that death would be better than the arranged marriage, but her brothers convinced her that she must do her part to turn the land of Rus to repentance and save the empire from a costly war.

Arriving in Cherson, the princess found Vladimir blind from a disease of the eyes, a misfortune the chronicler attributed to divine providence. She instructed Vladimir to accept baptism immediately, otherwise, he would not be cured.

си слышавъ володимеръ реч. да аще истина будет. то поистинѣ великъ бгъ [хрстьѩнескъ]. и повелѣ х[р]исти сѧ. епспъ же корсуньскіи. с попы цр҃цны. ѡгласивъ крсти володимира. ѩко възложи руку на нь. абье прозрѣ. видивъ же се володимеръ. напрасное ицѣленье. и прослави ба рекъ. топерво оувидѣхъ ба истиньнаго.[16]

When Vladimir heard this he said, 'If this proves to be the truth, then the God of the Christians is truly great.' Then he ordered that he should be baptised. The bishop of Cherson together with the princess's priests, after catchesizing [him], baptised Vladimir. And when [the bishop] laid his hand upon him, [the prince] immediately regained his sight. After seeing this sudden cure, Vladimir glorified God, saying, 'Now I have known the true God.'

[15] *PVL*, 109, 15–21. [16] *PVL*, 111, 9–16.

Following the supernatural healing, Vladimir and Anna were married, and the prince was instructed in the doctrine of the faith one final time. He then conducted his new bride, a company of clerics, and the relics of Saints Clement and Phoebus back to Kiev, along with a selection of church instruments and icons.[17]

Once ensconced in the capital, Vladimir began the work of converting his realm. He ordered idols to be overthrown, cut into pieces, and burned, and at his command the wooden statue of Perun was ceremoniously cast into the river. Next, the prince summoned the whole city to the banks of the Dnieper, where with the priests of the princess and those from Cherson, he presided over the baptism of Rus.

влѣзоша в воду и стаꙗху ѡвы до шие. а друзии до персии. Младии же ѿ берега. друзии же млади держаще. свершении же бродѧху. попове же стоꙗще мл҃твы творѧху. и бѧше си вѣдѣти радость на нб҃си и на земли. толико д҃шь спасаемыхъ.[18]

They went into the water, and some stood up to their necks, but others to their breasts. The younger ones were closer to the bank. Others were holding children [in their arms], while the adults waded farther out. The priests stood and performed prayers. And there was joy in heaven and upon earth to behold so many souls saved.

Prince Vladimir looked up to heaven and recited a lengthy prayer of his own, after which he ordered churches to be built in the places where pagan idols once stood and children to be trained in book-learning. The passage draws to an end with a long and triumphal panegyric, praising the inhabitants of Rus as 'a new Christian people, the chosen of God'.[19]

The chronicle entry for the following year offers a brief report on Vladimir's church-building efforts.

Въ лѣт ѕ҃.у҃.ҁ҃. Посемь же володимеръ живѧше. въ законѣ х(р)сьꙗньстѣ. помысли создати цр҃квь пре҃стыꙗ б҃ца. пославъ приведе ꙗ мастеры ѿ грекъ. и наченшю же здати и ꙗко сконча зижа. оукраси ю иконами.

17 On the cult of Saint Clement in early Rus, see E. V. Ukhanova, 'Kul't sv. Klimenta, papy Rimskogo, v istorii Vizantiiskoi i Drevnerusskoi tserkvi IX– pervoi poloviny XI vv.', *Aion Slavistica*, 5 (1998), pp. 548–67; E. V. Ukhanova, 'Obretenie moshchei sv. Klimenta, papy Rimskogo, v kontekste vneshnei i vnutrennei politiki Vizantii serediny IX v.', *VV*, 59 (2000), pp. 116–28; K. K. Akent'ev, 'O structure bogosluzhebnogo posledovaniia, opisannogo v Slove na perenesenie moshchei sv. Klimenta Rimskogo. Chast' I: Perenesenie moshchei', *Vizantinorossika*, 4 (2005), pp. 105–20; Iu. K. Begunov, 'Kliment Rimskii v slavianskoi traditsii: Nekotorye itogi i perspektivy issledovaniia', *Vizantinorossika,* 4, pp. 1–61; A. Iu. Karpov, 'Drevneishie russkie sochineniia o sv. Klimente Rimskom', *Ocherki feodal'noi Rossii*, 11 (2007), pp. 3–110; I. H. Garipzanov, 'Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints', in H. Antonsson and Garipzanov (eds.), *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 130–33.

18 *PVL*, 117, 22–118, 1. 19 *PVL*, 121, 3–4.

и поручи ю настасу корсѧнину. и попы корсуньскыꙗ. и пристави служити в неи. вдавъ ту все еже бѣ взѧлъ в корсуни. иконы. и съсуды и кртсы.[20]

In the year 6497 (989). Following [these events], Vladimir lived in the Christian faith and decided to build a church [in honour] of the most-holy Mother of God. He sent for masters from the Greeks and brought them [into Rus], and they began to build. And when it was completed, he adorned [the church] with icons, and entrusted it to Anastasius of Cherson. He likewise appointed Chersonite priests to serve in it, and gave to it all of the icons, vessels, and crosses that he had taken from Cherson.

The next two entries return attention to military exploits, mostly involving the ever-menacing Pechenegs from the steppe. The religious narrative picks up seven years later in the chronicle account for 996. In this passage, Vladimir is described as entering the newly completed church for the Mother of God and pronouncing another extensive prayer. The chronicle then elaborates on how the building came to be known as the Church of the Tithes:

и помолившюсѧ ему. рекъ сице даю ц҃ркви сеи ст҃ѣи бц҃и. ѿ имѣньꙗ моѥго и ѿ градъ моихъ десѧтую часть. и положи написавъ клѧтву въ ц҃ркви сеи рек. аще кто сего посу(д)ить да будет проклѧтъ.[21]

After completing the prayer, [Vladimir] said, 'I give to this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth of my wealth and [that of] my cities.' And he wrote out a pledge and deposited it in the church, saying, 'Anyone who annuls this [pledge] shall be cursed.'

The passage goes on to praise the prince's generosity to the poor and mercy towards criminals. Indeed, so great was his alms-giving and compassion that the leaders of the church were eventually forced to reprimand him for not properly punishing robbers and bandits.

Yet for all of his repentance and charity, Vladimir was born into a violent world, and he ultimately died in one. In the chronicle account for the year 1015, the reader learns that the saintly man passed away while preparing for war against his very own son, Iaroslav. The prince was mourned by boyars and beggars alike, and his body was interred at the Church of the Tithes. There follows an extensive encomium that proclaims Vladimir to have been a 'new Constantine of mighty Rome, who was himself baptised and who baptised his people'.[22] The story of the conversion concludes with this panegyric, and the 1015 passage continues with the tale of the martyrdom of Princes Boris and Gleb, a subject that I shall examine at length in the next chapter.

[20] *Ibid*., 24–122, 3. [21] *PVL*, 124, 18–22. [22] *PVL*, 130, 30–131, 5.

SAINT VLADIMIR THE DOUBTFUL?

The version of events recounted above was copied down in the early twelfth century by clerics who had never met Vladimir, never laid siege to Cherson, and never heard a philosopher speak to the Kievan court. A span of nearly 130 years separated these men from the events they described, the same amount of time separating the presidency of Bill Clinton from the US Civil War. Indeed, so much time had passed, according to Aleksei Shakhmatov, that the circumstances of the conversion were already 'long forgotten', a situation that compelled the chroniclers 'to build an edifice upon the sand, to resort to borrowings and analogies'.[23] The eminent nineteenth-century church historian Evgenii Golubinskii shared similar doubts about the chronicle report, as did the highly respected Byzantist Fedor Uspenskii, who in 1888 observed that the factual events of the conversion 'lie beneath a seal of mystery that no historian, using current scientific methods, is able to penetrate'.[24] A century later, during the millennium jubilee of the baptism, the Polish historian Andrzej Poppe reiterated that Uspenskii's remarks remained as relevant as ever, adding that 'to the chronicler, the age of conversion was shrouded in the mists of time'.[25] The uncertainty about the faith's origins apparently led to a proliferation of competing narratives, an issue that the chronicler mentioned in the passage for 988:

се же не свѣдуще право гл҃ть. ꙗко крстлъсѧ есть в киевѣ. и ини же рѣша василиви. друзии же инако скажють.[26]

Those who do not know the truth say [Vladimir] was baptised in Kiev, while others assert [that it took place] in Vasil'ev, while still others say otherwise.

Much the same could be said about the state of the field in the twenty-first century. The problems of when and where Vladimir entered the saving waters, and his political motivations for so doing, have long been the subject of vigorous debate.

The stories that modern historians tell about the conversion diverge rather significantly from the one found in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. This is partly a matter of sources, since they have access to a number of primary texts, from lands as distant as Ottonian Germany and Armenia, which were unknown and unintelligible to the bookmen of twelfth-century

[23] A. A. Shakhmatov, *RDRLS* (St Petersburg, 1908), p. 154.

[24] E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi* (Moscow 1904), vol. I, pp. 105–10. F. I. Uspenskii, *Rus' i Vizantiia v X v.* (Odessa, 1888), p. 35.

[25] A. Poppe, 'The Political Background of the Baptism of Rus'', in *The Rise of Christian Russia* (London, 1982), p. 208.

[26] *PVL*, 111, 24–26.

Kiev. References to the reign of Vladimir are preserved, for example, in the Latin-language letters of the bishop-missionary, Bruno of Querfurt, and the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg.[27] Byzantine sources are conspicuously silent about the baptism of the Rus, although the historical writings of Michael Psellus, John Scylitzes, and Leo the Deacon provide valuable information about their political and military activities in the period.[28] Additional reports on Byzantine–Rus relations may be gleaned from the 'universal history' of the Armenian Stepanos Asoghik, while the conversion itself is described in Arabic in the chronicle of Yahyā of Antioch.[29] By measuring the evidence in these tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts against that of later Kievan texts, scholars have attempted time and again to reconstruct the series of historical events leading to Vladimir's momentous decision. Disagreements are many and points of consensus relatively few. The most consistent historiographical narrative assumes something like the following shape.

Late in the year 987, a Byzantine general named Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself emperor, united all of Asia Minor beneath his banner, and marched an army towards Constantinople. Left with few options, the legitimate emperor Basil II looked to the Slav barbarians in the north for assistance. In the winter of 988, he dispatched an embassy to Kiev to negotiate the details of a military alliance with Prince Vladimir. In exchange for troops, Basil offered the hand of his sister Anna, a princess 'born in the purple', on the condition that the pagan prince consent to be baptised. Vladimir agreed to the arrangement and sent 6,000 troops to defend the Imperial City. A year later, in April 989, these forces played a crucial role in defeating Phocas and saving Basil's throne. The prince and his people were baptised shortly thereafter and awaited the appearance of their new Byzantine princess. When she failed to arrive, Vladimir decided to remind the duplicitous emperor of his promise. He attacked the Byzantine possessions in the Black Sea and seized control of Cherson. Rather than make yet another enemy, Basil chose to honour his earlier

[27] Cf. Bruno's letter to Henry II, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, n.s. 4, 3 (1973), pp. 85–106. *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, ed. David Warner (Manchester, 2001).

[28] M. Psellus, *Chronographie; ou Histoire d'un siecle de Byzance (976–1077)*, ed. E. Renauld (Paris, 1926), vol. I, p. 9. *loannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. Thurn (Berlin, 1973) p. 336. J. Scylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811–1057*, ed. John Wortley (Cambridge, 2011). A. Talbot and D. F. Sullivan (eds.), *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century* (Washington DC, 2005).

[29] *Des Stephanos von Taron armenische Geschichte*, ed. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 209–12. *Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Sa'id d'Antioche*, ed. I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev (Paris, 1932), p. 423. On the history of Byzantine Armenia, see P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963). On the treatment of the Rus in medieval Arabic sources, see T. J. Hraundal, 'New Perspectives on Eastern Vikings/Rus in Arabic Sources', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 10 (2014), pp. 68–70.

pledge. Anna was sent to Cherson, a wedding was celebrated, and Vladimir returned to Kiev with his new Porphyrogenite wife and a party of Byzantine clerics.[30]

This modern narrative about the conversion emphasized the realpolitik considerably more than the early medieval version, although the two accounts do exhibit some similarities. Perhaps most strikingly, in both cases the coming of Christianity is presented as a top-down affair, carried out exclusively by the ruling dynasty. The Byzantine faith is imported into Rus at one time and one place by one powerful man. However, not all scholars subscribe to this traditional model. An alternative explanation has recently been proposed by a group of scholars drawing on archaeological data, in addition to the literary evidence. For these researchers, the events in tenth-century Rus reflect a much broader transnational trend, namely, the conversion of Scandinavia and northern Europe. Jonathan Shepard points out that Rus traders had maintained contacts with Christian communities since as early as the ninth century and that religious artefacts, such as pendant crosses, have been discovered in burial sites predating the reign of Vladimir by several decades. He also suggests

[30] Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, vol. I, pp. 105–87, 224–47. A. Bert'e Delagard, 'Kak Vladimir osazhdal Korsun'', *IORIaS*, 14 (1909), pp. 285–97. V. G. Vasil'evskii, *Trudy* (St Petersburg, 1909), vol. II, pp. 56–124. M. D. Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii Kievskoi Rusi* (St Petersburg, 1913), pp. 154–61. M. Grushevs'kii, *Istoriia Ukraini-Rusi* (Kiev, 1913), vol. I, pp. 495–515, 572–78. E. F. Shmurlo, 'Kogda i gde krestilsia Vladimir Sviatoi?', *Zapiski Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva v Prage* (Prague, 1927), pp. 120–48. A. V. Florovskii, *Chekhi i vostochnye slaviane: Ocherki po istorii cheshko-russkikh otnoshenii (X–XVIII vv.)* (Prague, 1935), vol. I, pp. 20–35. G. Ostrogorskii, 'Vladimir Sviatoi i Vizantiia', *Vladimirskii Sbornik* (1938), pp. 31–40. M. V. Levchenko, *Ocherki po istorii russko-vizantiiskikh otnoshenii* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 340–85. I. Shevchenko, 'The Christianization of Kievan Rus', *The Polish Review*, 5 (1960), pp. 29–35. V. D. Koroliuk, *Zapadnye slaviane i Kievskaia Rus' v X–XI vv.* (Moscow, 1964), pp. 74–100. F. Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, 1970), pp. 270–72. A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 255–62. Dmitrii Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971), pp. 170, 192–201. L. Müller, *Die Taufe Russlands* (Munich, 1987). L. Müller, 'Die Chronik-Erzählung über die Taufe Vladimirs des Heiligen', in R. Olesch and H. Rothe (eds.), *Slavistische Studien zum X. Internationalen Slavisten-kongreß in Sofia 1988* (Cologne, 1988), pp. 429–88. A. Poppe, 'How the Conversion of Rus' Was Understood in the Eleventh Century', *HUS*, 11 (1987), pp. 287–302. A. Poppe, 'Two Concepts of the Conversion of Rus' in Kievan Writings', *HUS*, 12–13 (1988–89), pp. 311–92. A. Poppe, *Christian Russia in the Making* (Aldershot, 2007). V. Vodoff, *Naissance de la Chrétienté russe, la conversion du prince Vladimir de Kiev (988) et ses conséquences (XIe–XIIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1988). G. Labuda, 'Religious Centers and their Missions to Kievan Rus': From Olga to Volodimer', *HUS*, 12–13 (1989), pp. 159–93. J. L. Fennell, *A History of the Russian Church to 1488* (London, 1995), pp. 20–45. A. V. Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh: Mezhdistsiplinarnye ocherki, kul'turnykh, torgovykh, politicheskikh sviazei IX–XII vekov* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 391–434. V. Ia. Petrukhin, *Kreshchenie Rusi: Ot iazychestva k khristianstvu* (Moscow, 2006). N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir i kreschenie Rusi* (St Petersburg, 2008), pp. 104–48. J. Shepard, 'The Coming of Christianity to Rus: Authorized and Unauthorized Versions', in in C. B. Kendal, O. Nicholson, and W. D. Phillips, Jr (eds.), *Conversion to Christianity from Late Antiquity to the Modern Age* (Minneapolis, 2009), pp. 185–222.

that syncretic practices remained prevalent among the lower social strata, both within Kiev and without, long after the conversion of the urban political elite.[31] John Lind, on the other hand, argues that a form of 'Varangian Christianity' was practised in Rus prior to the mass baptism, while Ildar Garipzanov stresses that early evangelical efforts in the Christian north frequently crossed confessional and liturgical divides, a fact that clashes with the highly polemical picture presented in later narrative sources.[32] Viewed as a whole, therefore, the latest research indicates that the Christianization of Rus was probably not a single and instantaneous event of the late tenth century, but rather a much longer and more gradual process, which began well before Vladimir's conversion and continued long after it.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES: CHERSON AND KIEV

Philologists approach the baptism of Rus with rather different goals from those of their colleagues in history and archaeology. They too are in the habit of reconstructing things, although their interests lie primarily in long-lost texts, rather than in the proper ordering of historical events. The discipline is still very much concerned with deeds and dates, only the heroes under investigation are changed. The most important actors are no longer the historical Vladimir or his Byzantine bride: they are the authors and editors of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* and the still earlier scribes who possibly preceded them. Who were these men and when were they active? What kind of sources did they have at their disposal, as they wrote and compiled the conversion myth? How many different narratives, from how many different eras and places, do the extant redactions of the chronicle contain?

Such questions have dominated discussion for decades, and, as usual, the touchstone of the debate is the scholarship of Aleksei Shakhmatov.[33] He sees the story of Prince Vladimir's conversion in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* as a purely literary invention, a product of creative writing and

[31] J. Shepard, 'Rus', in N. Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 369–416.

[32] I. H. Garipzanov, 'Wandering Clerics and Mixed Rituals in the Early Christian North, *c.* 1000–*c.* 1150', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012), pp. 1–17. J. H. Lind, 'Christianity on the Move: The Role of the Varangians in Rus and Scandinavia', in F. Anrdroshchuk, J. Shepard, and M. White (eds.), *Byzantium and the Viking World* (Uppsala, 2016), pp. 409–42.

[33] On the role of Shakhmatov in the history of Russian chronicle studies, see Chapter 2, pp. 46–55. For earlier studies on the baptism accounts, see Metropolitan Makarii of Moscow, 'Pamiat' i pokhvala kniaziu russkomu Vladimiru', *Khristianskoe chtenie*, 2 (1849), pp. 317–29; M. Sukhomilov, *O drevnei russkoi letopisi kak pamiatnik literatury* (St Petersburg, 1856), pp. 95–100; Golubinskii, *Istoriia russkoi tserkvi*, vol. I, pp. 133, 224; N. K. Nikol'skii, 'K voprosu ob istochnikakh letopisnogo skazaniia o sv. Vladimire', *Khristianskoe chtenie*, 7 (1902), pp. 89–106.

editing, in which several 'contradictory sources' are 'artfully combined'.[34] Among these earlier sources, two non-extant tales stand out: the so-called Cherson legend (*Korsunskaia legenda*) and an older story about the conversion of Rus from the 'most ancient chronicle layer' (*drevneishii svod*). The first of these hypothetical texts is particularly dear to Shakhmatov, so much so that in 1906 he devoted an entire book to the topic, *The Cherson Legend of the Baptism of Vladimir*, and returned to the subject again in his magnum opus, *Investigations into the Most Ancient Russian Chronicle Compilations*.[35] In both of these studies, the linguist is at pains to prove that his reconstruction of the legend truly existed in independent form and that it was the original story of the baptism of Rus. He argues that Greek clergy serving at the Church of the Tithes in the last quarter of the eleventh century created the legend by combining 'two narratives from two different historical and cultural worlds' into a single story of military triumph and national conversion.[36] The first narrative concerned Prince Vladimir's miraculous healing and baptism in Cherson and supposedly originated as an oral legend among the Greek population of that city. The second story arose in the court circles of eleventh-century Kiev and took the form of a folk song, or *bylina*, about Prince Vladimir's siege of Constantinople and marriage to the Byzantine *tsarevna*. In an 'act of poetic creativity', the author of the legend merged these epic and hagiographic motifs together with the historical facts about Vladimir's siege.[37] From Shakhmatov's point of view, therefore, the Cherson legend has little to do with historical reality. The story is an inventive composite of facts, folklore, and religious fiction, aimed at refiguring Vladimir's military triumph against Byzantium as a crucial event, leading directly to the conversion of Rus.

The first part of Shakhmatov's scheme involves a hypothetical legend, comprising a still earlier hypothetical oral tale and a hypothetical folk song. The second part is no less speculative. The scholar believes that there was another narrative tradition, originating in Kiev, which was first written down by the author of the *drevneishii svod* in 1039. In this very early version of events, missionaries visit the Kievan court and the prince listens to the philosopher's speech, only this time the outcome is different. Rather than putting off his decision to a later date, as he does in the extant manuscripts, Vladimir accepts the Christian faith and the philosopher baptises him on the spot. According to Shakhmatov, this was the official narrative in Kievan circles for nearly all of the eleventh century, until

[34] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 154.
[35] A. A. Shakhmatov, *Korsunskaia legenda o kreshchenii Vladimira* (St Petersburg, 1906). Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. 133–54, 328–41.
[36] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 133. [37] *Ibid.*, pp. 135–37.

the year 1095, when the editor of the 'beginning compilation' (*nachal'nyi svod*) decided to merge the local story with the Cherson legend. Weaving together two contradictory accounts was not as simple as mechanically copying one story after the other, however. To accommodate the new sequence of events, the editor rewrote the ending of the original chronicle account, so that the prince was depicted declining baptism from the Greek philosopher. At the same time, in order to provide a bridge between the two tales, he created the entire 'testing of the faiths' passage and inserted it in the year 987.[38] This editorial sleight of hand is therefore the reason that the extant manuscripts appear rather disjointed and illogical in places. The story reads like a mélange of earlier tales, Shakhmatov concludes, because it was ultimately the collective work of three generations of ecclesiastical history writers: the editor of the *drevneishii svod* of 1039, the editor of the *nachal'nyi svod* of 1095, and the Greek clerics assigned to the Church of the Tithes in the mid-eleventh century.[39]

Objections and corrections to Shakhmatov's analysis are far too numerous and diverse to catalogue fully. His influence is clearly evident in the research of scholars such as Mikhail Priselkov, Dmitrii Likhachev, R. V. Zhdanov, Ludolf Müller, Aleksei Gippius, Nadezhda Miliutenko, and Savva Mikheev, who for all of their theoretical and methodological differences nevertheless perceive the baptism story as a conflation of legends from two cities, Cherson and Kiev.[40] Certain of Shakhmatov's ideas can also be found in the work of critics otherwise opposed to his conclusions, such as Lev Cherepnin, Arsenii Nasonov, Andrzej Poppe, and Donald Ostrowski, all of whom admit the possibility of the existence of the Cherson legend, even if they dispute its reconstructed contents, as well as the time and place of its composition.[41] In recent years, moreover, a particularly large body of scholarship has grown up around the philosopher's speech, a section that Shakhmatov originally believed to be based on a Bulgarian legend about the conversion of Prince Boris.[42] Some contemporary researchers, such as Vladimir Petrukhin and Natal'ia

[38] Shakhmatov, *Korsunskaia legenda*, p. 92. [39] *Ibid.*, p. 60. Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, pp. 328–41.

[40] Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii*, pp. 80–84, 154–61. R. V. Zhdanov, 'Kreshchenie Rusi i nachal'naia letopis'', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 5 (1939), pp. 3–30. D. S. Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi i ikh kul'turno-istoricheskoe znachenie* (Leningrad, 1947), pp. 58–75. Müller, 'Die Chronik-Erz ählung', pp. 429–88. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir*, p. 228.

[41] L. V. Cherepnin, '"Povest' vremennykh let", ee redaktsii i predshestvuiushchie ei letopisnye svody', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 25 (1948), pp. 302–33. A. N. Nasonov, *Istoriia russkogo letopisaniia, XI–nachala XVIII v.: Ocherki i issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 20–34. D. Ostrowski, 'The Account of Volodimir's Conversion in the *Povest' vremennykh let*: A Chiasmus of Stories', *HUS*, 28, 1–4 (2006), pp. 567–80.

[42] A. S. L'vov, 'Issledovanie Rechi filosofa', in V. V. Vinogradov (ed.), *Pamiatniki drevnerusskoi pis'mennosti. Iazyk i tekstologiia* (Moscow, 1968), pp. 333–96. S. Franklin, 'Some Apocryphal Sources of Kievan Russian Historiography', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 15 (1982), pp. 1–27.

Pokhil'ko, claim that this text originated as a catechetical manual for Christian converts, while others, such as J. Reinhart and Tetiana Vilkul, argue that it was compiled by the chroniclers themselves and never existed as an independent text.[43]

Another trend in the secondary literature concerns the matter of archetypes. What sort of biblical, historiographical, and hagiographical models did the chroniclers draw on when they created the textual figure of Prince Vladimir? If one were to raise such a question amidst a gathering of Slavic medievalists, of all those who had ever studied the conversion myth, a great shout would immediately go up throughout the crowd. A chorus of names, ranging from Moses, Melchizedek, and Saint Eustace to Justinian the Great and Harald Fairhair of Norway would be heard among the hubbub.[44] More frequently, the names of King David and King Solomon would be pronounced, and the name of the apostle Paul, more frequently still.[45] Yet one name, one candidate for the main typological model for Prince Vladimir, would ultimately resound above all the rest: the name of Saint Constantine the Great.[46]

Kh. Trendafilov, 'Rechta na filosof v staroruskata Povest' vremennykh let i polemichnete traditsii na Kirill-Konstantin', *Starob"lgarska literatura*, 22 (1990), pp. 34–46. H. Trunte, 'Doctrina Christiana: Untersuchungen zu Komposition und Quellen der sogenannten "Rede des Philosophen" in der Altrussischen Chronik', in G. Birkfellner (ed.), *Millennium Russiae Christianae* (Cologne, 1993), pp. 355–94. N. I. Miliutenko, 'K voprosu o nekotorykh istochnikakh Rechi Filosofa', *TODRL*, 55 (2004), pp. 9–17. V. I. Mansikka, *Religiia vostochnykh slavian* (Moscow, 2005), pp. 75–78. P. V. Lukin, 'Iazycheskaia reforma Vladimira Sviatoslavicha v nachal'nom letopisannii: Ustnaia traditsiia ili literaturnye reministsentsii?', in G. V. Glazyrina (ed.), *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy* (Moscow, 2011), pp. 324–52.

[43] V. Ia. Petrukhin, *Ot Bytiia k Iskhodu: Otrazhenie bibleiskikh siuzhetov v slavianskoi i evreiskoi narodnoi kul'ture* (Moscow, 1998), vol. II, pp. 269–86. J. Reinhart, '"Rech' filosofa" Povesti vremennykh let i ee velikomoravskaia i preslavskaia predystoriia', *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch*, 54 (2008), pp. 151–70. T. L. Vilkul, 'O proiskhozhdenii "Rechi filosofa"', *Palaeoslavica*, 20 (2012), pp. 1–15. T. L. Vilkul, 'Kniga Iskhod v Rechi filosofa', *Srednevekovaia Rus'*, 10 (2012), pp. 113–25. N. P. Pokhil'ko, '"Rech' filosofa" v Povesti vremennykh let: Vopros funktsii i addresata', *Materialy po arkheologii i istorii antichnogo i srednevekogo Kryma*, 8 (2016), pp. 408–54.

[44] R. Picchio, 'From Boris to Vladimir: Some Remarks on the Emergence of Proto-Orthodox Slavdom', *HUS*, 12–13 (1989), pp. 200–13. G. Podskalsky, *Christentum und theologische Literature in der Kiever Rus' (988–1237)* (Munich, 1982), pp. 198–206, 380–81. M. B. Pliukhanova, *Siuzhety i simvoly Moskovskogo tsarstva* (St Petersburg, 1995), pp. 120–24. M. N. Virolainen, 'Avtor teksta istorii: Siuzhetoslozhenie v letopisi', in *Avtor i tekst: Sbornik statei* (St Petersburg, 1996), p. 39. S. Senderovich, 'Sv. Vladimir: K mifopoezisu', *TODRL*, 49 (1996), pp. 300–13. C. Raffensperger, 'Shared (Hi)Stories: Vladimir of Rus and Harald Fairhair of Norway', *RR*, 68, 4, (2009), pp. 569–82. W. Hanak, *The Nature and the Image of Princely Power in Kievan Rus', 980–1054* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 25–50.

[45] Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh*, pp. 435–50. I. N. Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Germenevticheskie osnovy istochnikovedeniia letopisnykh tekstov* (Moscow, 2004), pp. 167–73. D. K. Prestel, 'Vladimir's Conversion to Christianity: Divine Providence and the Taking of Kherson', in N. Lupinin, D. Ostrowski, and J. B. Spock (eds.), *Tapestry of Russian Christianity: Studies in History and Culture* (Columbus, 2016), pp. 1–21.

[46] D. S. Likhachev, 'Kommentarii', in V. P. Adrianova-Peretz (ed.), *Povest' vremennykh let* (Moscow, 1950), vol. II, pp. 296–97. I. Kologrivov, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi sviatosti* (Syracuse, 1991), pp.

Such a response is perhaps to be expected. It takes no great skill, after all, to identify a typological model announced explicitly in the text of the chronicle: 'This is the new Constantine of mighty Rome.'[47] A similar statement appears in Metropolitan Hilarion's mid-eleventh-century 'Sermon on Law and Grace':

Подобниче великааго коньстантина. равнооумне. равнохⷭ҇любче. равночестителю слоужителемь его.[48]

O you likeness of Constantine the Great: equal in wisdom, equal in love for Christ, equal in honour for his servants.

The Roman emperor is likewise invoked in Iakov the Monk's 'In Memory and Praise of Prince Vladimir', an encomium dating to roughly the same period:

И ты, блаженыи княже Володимерю, подобно Косянтину великому створи, якоже онъ, вѣрою великою и любовью Божиею подвихся, оутверди всю вселеную любовью и вѣрою, и святымъ крещеньемъ просвити весь миръ . . . и кресть обрѣте, всего мира спасенье, с божественою и богомудрою матерью своею святою Оленою . . . Такоже и блаженыи князь Володимиръ створи съ бабои своеи Олгои.[49]

And you, O blessed prince Vladimir, have been made like unto Constantine the Great. For just as he was inspired by great faith and love for God, and confirmed the whole universe in love and faith, enlightening the whole world with holy baptism . . . obtaining the cross, the salvation of the whole world, along with his divine and godly-wise mother Saint Helena . . . So you too have done, O blessed prince Vladimir, with your grandmother Olga.

As these sources make clear, the notion that Vladimir played the same role in Rus that Constantine played in Rome was already widespread among the local clergy by the middle of the eleventh century. Identifying and interpreting this typology is therefore a commonplace in the modern scholarship, although at least one issue remains unresolved. It is the question of what texts the chroniclers must have had in their possession,

64–65. S. Franklin, *Sermons and Rhetoric of Kievan Rus'* (Cambirdge, 1991), p. xxxv. On Vladimir's possible connections to a different Constantine, the ninth-century apostle to the Slavs, see A. Timberlake, 'Point of View and Conversion Narrative: Vita Constantini and Povest' vremennykh let', in F. B. Uspenskii (ed.), *Miscellanea Slavica: Sbornik statei k 70-letiiu Borisa Andreevicha Uspenskogo* (Moscow, 2008), pp. 256–72.

47 *PVL*, 130, 30.

48 '"Slovo o zakone i blagodati" Ilariona Kievskogo: Drevneishaia versiia po spisku GIM Sin. 591' (ed. K. K. Akent'ev), *Vizantinorossika*, 3 (2005), p. 147.

49 'Pamiat' i pokhvalu kniaziu russkomu Vladimiru', in N. I. Miliutenko (ed.), *A. A. Shakhmatov, Zhitiia Kniazia Vladimira* (St Petersburg, 2014), pp. 204–205.

in order to make such a comparison. How, exactly, did the clerics in Kiev know anything about the life and deeds of Saint Constantine?

A number of textual sources have been nominated as candidates. Riccardo Picchio, for instance, suggests that the 'Constantinian model' was acculturated in early Rus through Eusebius' famous hagiography, *Life of Constantine*.[50] 'The works of Eusebius', Picchio writes, 'offered medieval Orthodox Slavic writers the largest collection of rhetorical clichés and doctrinal justification by which they could celebrate the ideal of an Orthodox hegemon acting as the supreme guide and teacher and being directly inspired by God.'[51] The linguist's claim is a rather precarious one, however, given that there is no evidence that such a text ever existed in Rus, in either the original Greek or a Slavonic translation, for the entirety of the pre-modern period.[52] Another scholar, Nikolai Serebrianskii, also looks to hagiographical texts for a solution, although not necessarily to the writings of Eusebius. He proposes that the hagiographical tradition surrounding Vladimir is modelled on the 'prologue *vita*' read aloud during the liturgical services for the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena. Yet the scholar is also quick to point out the weakness in his own argument, admitting that these shorter, liturgical *vitae* only appeared in Rus long after the first chronicle records were written.[53] A third hypothesis, first enunciated in 1856 by the Russian philologist Mikhail Sukhomilov, has recently come back into fashion, finding supporters in Andrei Ranchin and Francis Butler.[54] These thinkers maintain that the conversion of Vladimir in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* is fashioned after the conversion of Constantine in the ninth-century *Chronicle of George Hamartolos*. There is an extant Slavonic translation of this text dating to the early Middle Ages, and its influence on the first Kievan chroniclers is well documented.[55] Yet a side-by-side comparison of the two stories

[50] See Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ed. A. Cameron and S. G. Hall (Oxford, 1999).

[51] R. Picchio, 'Models and Patterns in the Literary Tradition of Medieval Orthodox Slavdom', in *American Contributions to the Seventh International Congress of Slavists* (The Hague, 1973), vol. II, p. 451.

[52] Zero versions of this text are listed in the standard Soviet-era bibliography of all known manuscripts up through the seventeenth century. See D. S. Likhachev (ed.), *SKK*, vols. I–III (St Petersburg, 1987–98).

[53] N. I. Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkiia kniazheskiia zhitiia: Obzor redaktsii i teksty* (Moscow, 1915), p. 289.

[54] Sukhomilov, *O drevnei russkoi letopisi kak pamiatnik literatury*, pp. 97–98. A. M. Ranchin, 'Khronika Georgiia Amartola i 'Povest' vremennykh let': Konstantine ravnoapostol'nyi i kniaz' Vladimir Sviatoslavich', *Germenevtika drevnerusskoi literatury*, 10 (2000), pp. 52–69. F. Butler, *Enlightener of Rus': The Image of Vladimir Sviatoslavovich across the Centuries* (Bloomington, 2002), pp. 43–82.

[55] On the translation of Byzantine chronicles, see S. Franklin, 'K voprosu o vremeni i meste perevoda Khroniki Georgiia Amartola na slav. iazyk', *TODRL*, 41 (1988), pp. 324–30. On the relations between this text and the *Rus Primary Chronicle*, see T. Vilkul, 'O khronograficheskikh istochnikakh 'Povesti vremennykh let' i vremeni poiavleniia drevnerusskikh khronografov', in

reveals only the most superficial of similarities. In the account of Hamartolos, Constantine falls ill with a disease of the skin and his physicians advise him to bathe in the blood of newborn babes. The emperor rejects their pagan prescriptions, converts to the Christian faith, and experiences a miraculous healing.[56] Apart from the general motif of being cured at baptism, however, the two accounts share little in common and exhibit no signs of direct textual borrowing. The main reason that scholars continue to put forward Hamartolos as a possible source, it seems, is that they are simply unaware of any other options. His chronicle is the only surviving Slavonic-language historical text with a report on Constantine's baptism and so, *ipso facto*, it must have served as the inspiration for Vladimir's depiction in the early Kievan chronicles.

Opinions about the conversion are diverse, as we have seen, but there is at least one characteristic that unites a good deal of the philological research. In study after study, when scholars attempt to explain the origins of the national conversion myth, they do so by making recourse to non-extant texts. Shakhmatov and his followers point to the Cherson legend and the *drevneishii svod*, and to the even more distant materials that supposedly preceded them. Likhachev makes conjectures about the hypothetical 'Tale of the First Spread of Christianity in Rus'.[57] Serebrianskii and Miliutenko claim that the stories about Vladimir derive from an ancient and long-vanished tale or saint's life, composed while the prince was still alive.[58] Igor Danilevskii and Savelii Senderovich, among many others, cite chapter and verse from the modern Bible, despite the fact that no such book existed in Russia until the year 1499.[59] Time and again, scholars search for the original sources of the conversion narrative, find nothing, and then imagine the existence of hypothetical documents in order to fill in the blanks. But what if there was another possibility, grounded in the analysis of real texts? What if instead of reconstructing the narratives of imaginary manuscripts, we were to turn attention to the narratives that actually do exist and that are preserved inside a set of books that represent over 70 per cent of the period's surviving records? What, in other words, if we stopped looking for Vladimir's archetypes in

D. D. Beliaev and T. V. Gimon (eds.), *Drevneishie gosudarstva Vostochnoi Evropy: Zarozhdenie istoriopisaniia v obshchestvakh Drevnosti i Srednevekov'ia* (Moscow, 2016), pp. 655–705.

56 *Vremennik Georgiia Monakha (Khronika Georgiia Amartola)*, ed. V. Matveenko and L. Shchegoleva (Moscow, 2000), pp. 262–63.

57 Likhachev, *Russkie letopisi*, pp. 58–75.

58 Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkiia kniazheskiia zhitiia*, p. 80. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir*, p. 150.

59 Senderovich, 'Sv. Vladimir: K mifopoezisu', pp. 300–13. Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let*, pp. 167–73.

hypothetical manuscripts and started looking for them in the liturgical books of the Byzantine church?

THE LITURGICAL CONSTANTINE

My suggestion here is that the church services were again the source of at least some of the information that scholars traditionally attribute to non-extant tales and hagiographies. Take the Cherson legend for an example. There is an important link between Shakhmatov's reconstruction and the Byzantine rite, a connection apparently overlooked by the philologist himself. Nearly every liturgical citation that appears in the annals from 980 to 1015 also appears in Shakhmatov's hypothetical text.[60] The scholar clearly discerned a subtext beneath the religious materials in the story of the baptism of Rus, and he assumed that subtext was a single, long-lost historical tale, the Cherson legend. Shakhmatov did not distinguish the liturgical origin of these materials, and as a result, he did not seem to recognize one of the most important sources for Prince Vladimir's depiction in the chronicle: the image of Constantine the Great from the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena and several other related liturgical feasts. I should therefore like to suggest that it was these religious ceremonies, not the writings of Eusebius, Hamartolos, or Greek clerics in Cherson, which were primarily responsible for the spread of the so-called Constantinian model. I contend that the main way that clerics in Kiev learned about the holy emperor was by singing hymns about him at church, not by reading from a book in their cells or in the scriptorium.

In what follows, I shall endeavour to test this proposition by uncovering traces of the liturgy in the text of the chronicle, in much the same fashion that I did in the previous chapter on Princess Olga. My strategy in this case is slightly modified, however. Given the size and scope of the annals devoted to Vladimir, I am obliged to limit my investigation to a few critical passages. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive catalogue of all the liturgical elements appearing in all the entries covering the prince's reign. I must pass therefore over several topics that have already been treated in an earlier version of this study. I shall not reproduce, for example, my investigation into the prince's pagan past in the year 980, a passage that depicts Vladimir as both a 'new David' and a 'lover of women like unto Solomon'. Neither shall I revisit my earlier hypothesis that the Tale of the Varangian Martyrs is based on the hymnography for Roman Christians who perished during the

60 Shakhmatov, *Korsunskaia legenda,* pp. 110–20.

Diocletian persecutions.[61] Rather than give attention to these broader topics, I shall focus on a more specialized philological problem, one that has been largely overlooked in the earlier scholarship.

As noted in the survey of the scholarly literature above, the great majority of scholars who have written on the subject accept the idea that the extant conversion narrative is cobbled together from two different traditions. A story about Vladimir's baptism in Kiev by a Greek philosopher is combined with a story about his initiation following the siege of Cherson. The question that few scholars have thought to ask, however, is *why* the chroniclers decided to merge the two traditions together in the first place? What compelled them to rewrite the myth of Christian origins for their native land so dramatically? Even the normally verbose Shakhmatov was reluctant to discuss the subject. He believed that the editor of the *nachal'nyi svod* united the two tales sometime in the 1090s, but he remained unusually reticent about the scribe's reasons for doing so, stating only that the original Kievan story 'was changed under the influence' of the more 'enduring and rewarding Cherson legend'.[62] Writing a century before Shakhmatov, in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, the first great modern historian of Russia, Nikolai Karamzin, advanced a rather more political interpretation. 'Vladimir could have been christened in his own capital', the statesman writes, 'but the magnificent prince desired glory and grandeur on the occasion of this important action . . . Pride in his might and glory did not permit Vladimir to humble himself . . . and meekly request baptism. He therefore decided to win the Christian faith militarily and to take its holiness with the arm of a conqueror.'[63] Another observer, a student of Shakhmatov's named Mikhail Priselkov, explained the form of the extant account in still different terms. In his reading, the story of the conversion of Rus represents an exercise in ecclesiastical diplomacy, rather than an expression of nationalist hubris. He speculated that the Kievan narrative was rewritten in order to reflect the version of events found in the Cherson legend, with an eye towards recasting the prince as 'a true follower of Greek orthodoxy and its hierarchy'.[64] The end goal of all this editorial manoeuvring, Priselkov claimed, was to provide Prince Vladimir with a biography such as to make him worthy of canonization in the eyes of the Constantinopolitan church.

[61] See S. Griffin, *Byzantine Liturgy and the Primary Chronicle*, PhD dissertation (University of California, Los Angeles, 2014), pp. 48–77.
[62] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 154.
[63] N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo* (St Petersburg, 1818). Cited from Butler, *Enlightener of Rus'*, p. 48.
[64] Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii*, p. 304.

While Karamzin was right to suggest that the story was redacted to show Vladimir proactively adopting the new faith, and Priselkov was convincing in his view of the redactions being undertaken in order to depict the prince with saintly attributes, neither man realized that the chroniclers in Kiev made these editorial decisions with a specific narrative template in mind. It was a template that they had learned and internalized from the Byzantine service books. Year after year, the clergy in Kiev went to church and prayed an elaborate myth about Saint Constantine and his Christianization of the Roman Empire. The following hymn from the emperor's feast day expresses the basic plot:

Свѣтъ свѣтьлыи • звѣзда невечерьнѧѧ • отъ невърнѧ въ разоумъ • божествьныи пришьдъ • приведенъ бысть освѧтиті люди и градъ • и образъ крьста • на небеси оузьрѣвъ • оуслыша отътоудоу • симь побѣжаи врагы твоꙗ • тѣм приимъ • разоумъ доуховьныи чиститель бысть и цьсарь • милостию оутвьрдивъ • цьркъвь хрьстовоу • правовѣрьныихъ цьсарь отьць • егоже рака • ицѣлениꙗ точить • костѧнтине равьне апостоломъ • съ материю богомоудрою • молисѧ о доушахъ нашихъ.[65]

The all-radiant light and never-waning star, passing from unbelief to divine understanding, was led to sanctify his people and city. And beholding the image of the cross in the sky, he heard therefrom: 'By this conquer your enemies!' And so, having received spiritual understanding as a priest and king, you have mercifully established the church of Christ, O father of all right-believing kings, whose relics pour forth healing. O Constantine, equal of the apostles, with your divinely wise mother, pray for our souls.

This hymn depicts the emperor in four different roles. He is a convert who miraculously hears a voice from the sky and passes 'from unbelief to divine understanding'; a Roman *basileus* who conquers his enemies with the 'image of the cross'; a 'priest and king' who establishes the church of Christ; and a holy 'equal of the apostles' who intercedes on behalf of the faithful. Singing, hearing, and praying this myth over the years, the monks and priests of Rus came to possess a clear picture of what the ideal life, and afterlife, of a saintly monarch should look like. They came to understand precisely what needed to be done, in other words, to make the conversion of their native land appear more like the conversion of the empire, and to make the man who brought Christianity to the Rus resemble more closely the emperor who had ended the persecution of Christians within the Roman Empire.

Standing and praying at liturgy, the chroniclers learned that presenting Vladimir as a royal saint entailed considerably more than the mechanical

[65] Sin. 166, 125.2–126.2.

combination of Greek tales and local legends. It required the appropriation and adaptation of Byzantium's own ritual narratives. If the land of Rus were to enjoy princely saints of its own, and if it were to participate in a liturgical past alongside the Jews and Romans, then it needed a myth of Christian origins that could justify such a monumental change in status. Thus, at whatever time the chronicle came to assume its present form, whether that was the year 1115 or a different date, the editors redacted the extant tales into a new narrative showing Vladimir establishing Christianity in Kiev very much as the Byzantine rite shows the emperor Constantine establishing it in Rome. No longer would Vladimir convert under the spell of a Greek philosopher, but by the direct and miraculous intervention of God Himself. No longer would the Byzantines appear as the saviours and evangelists of Rus. An east Slavic apostle-king, chosen by God and enlightened by holy baptism, would personally bring the true faith to his people.

The chroniclers announced the appearance of this 'new Constantine' of Rus not once, but twice in the text, at the beginning and end of the conversion narrative. The first time, in the Tale of the Varangian Martyrs in 983, the declaration is deeply contextual, whereas the second time, in the encomium for the prince in 1015, it is explicit and unmistakable. In the earlier passage, the clerics foretold providential events still to come and they communicated their message in a kind of liturgical code. One way, and maybe the only way, that a modern audience can crack this code is to reconstruct the ritual context that surrounded these writers and look for the places where the linguistic, narrative, and ideological patterns coincide. Drawing on this newfound data, we may then momentarily suspend our disbelief and attempt to read the historical passage as a medieval cleric might have read it. Such an approach is not without its epistemological pitfalls, of course, and charges of anachronism are probably unavoidable. Yet any other approach, any other reading, which discounts the omnipresent force of liturgy in the early Middle Ages, is surely just as anachronistic, if not more so. Almost every historian of the Middle Ages, and particularly of the Middle Ages in Rus, sees as through a glass darkly. The recovery of liturgy cannot alter this fundamental fact, but it can perhaps change our perception of what we see through that glass, by shedding new light on very old texts.

The chronicle entry for the year 983 is a prime case in point. On the face of it, the passage seems to be a fairly conventional saint's life about two Varangian martyrs, a father and son, who are killed for refusing to offer sacrifice to idols after Vladimir's military victory over the Yatvingians. From the perspective of a modern academic reader, there

is nothing even remotely saintly about the prince's presentation in the passage. If anything, Vladimir is depicted as a religious villain, as a proud and godless persecutor of the right-believing Varangian Christians. He was the one, after all, who ordered the ritual sacrifice and oversaw the unruly mob. Yet for those familiar with the mythology of the Byzantine church, who could discern the liturgical elements in the text, the passage suggested a rather different reading. In the final few lines of the entry, the chroniclers provided a series of typological clues, written in the language of the liturgy, which were particularly meaningful to their clerical readership.

THE THIRTEENTH APOSTLE

The Byzantine rite told a very specific story about the spread of Christianity in the apostolic and post-apostolic church. The central figures in this story were the apostles, the disciples chosen by Christ to preach the Gospel and baptise the nations. The following kontakion from the late eleventh-century Feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist is typical of the hymnography for this lofty rank of saints:

Оученикъ бывъ божьствьнааго слова • съ павлмь всью просвѣтилъ еси землю и мракъ отъгъналъ еси • божьствьное • написавъ христово еваньгелие.[66]

You were a disciple of the divine word, [O holy apostle Luke]. Together with Paul, you enlightened the whole earth and drove away the darkness, having written the divine Gospel of Christ.

In the medieval eastern church, a synaxis commemorating all twelve of the apostles was celebrated annually on 30 June. Additionally, each disciple was also honoured with a special feast day of his own, and some, such as Saint John the Theologian, were commemorated at multiple feasts in the liturgical calendar. Every year on 26 September, for example, cantors in Rus sang this verse in his honour at vespers:

Апостольскыи вьрьхъ • богословию троуба • доухѡвьнааго воина • иже вселеноую богоу приведе • придѣте вѣрьнии оублажимъ • иоана препѣтааго . . .[67]

[66] *Tipografskii ustav: Ustav s kondakarem kontsa XI–nachala XII veka*, vols. I–III, ed. B. A. Uspenskii (Moscow, 2006), vol. II, pp. 92–93.

[67] *Stikhirar' mineinyi, notirovannyi, stikhery na sentiabr'-avgust*, RNB, Q.p.I.15, 32.2–31.1, ed. O. V. Gulinaia and B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=90497244 (accessed June 2018).

O come, you faithful, and let us bless the all-lauded John: the foremost of the apostles, the trumpet of theology, and warrior of the spirit, who has brought the universe to God.

The original disciples were not the only apostles recognized by the church, however. Many of 'the seventy', the men baptised by tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, were also commemorated with this distinction. The services for these saints stressed their role in turning the world away from idolatry, vanquishing evil spirits, and liberating mankind from the bondage of the devil. At the Feast of Saint Quadratus of Athens, for example, the choir chanted this troparion about the early Christian apologist and apostle:

Сн҃а проповѣдѣтелю цр҃кви • велию побѣдьника чс҃тоты • вселеная • конъдрате • позна тѧ • освѣтилъ еси оубо вьсѧ словесы своими • мч҃ниемь врага попьралъ еси • оч҃е пр҃бне • ха҃ б҃а моли даровати намь велию мло(с).[68]

The universe acknowledges you, O preacher of the church of the Son and great victor of chastity, Quadratus. For you have enlightened all with your words, and by your martyrdom, O venerable father, you have trampled upon the enemy. Pray to Christ God to grant us great mercy.

As these few verses indicate, Byzantine hymnodists had a clear and consistent understanding of what the apostolic mission entailed. Christ had ascended into heaven, but his salvific power and grace continued to spread throughout the world, through the words and deeds of his specially chosen successors.

For the Byzantines, however, election into the apostolic ranks had not ended on the day of Pentecost. There was another man, a thirteenth apostle, carefully chosen by Christ to grow the church and baptise the nations. That man was Constantine the Great, the emperor of Rome, who had received a special charisma from the Lord:

Дасть чловѣколюбьче • богочьстивоу оумȣ ти оугодьникȣ • прѣмудрость соломоню • давыдовоу кротость • апостольское правовѣрие • ꙗко цьсарь цьсаремъ • и господь господьствоующиимъ • съ нимьже ти милосьрденое • съмотрение славимъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе д [ушамъ наш].[69]

You gave to your pious favourite, O lover of mankind, the wisdom of Solomon, the meekness of David, and the orthodoxy of the apostles, for you are the King of kings and Lord of lords. With him, we glorify your loving dispensation, O merciful Jesus, the saviour of our souls.

[68] *MSON*, ed. I. V. Iagich (St Petersburg, 1886), vol. I, p. 168. [69] Sin. 166, 123.2.

There is some indication that contemporaries of the historical Constantine thought of him as an apostle. Eusebius, for example, claimed that the emperor constructed the original Church of the Holy Apostles with this designation in mind. 'He had in fact chosen this sight in the prospect of his own death', the biographer writes in the *Life of Constantine*, 'anticipating with an extraordinary fervour of faith that his body would share the title with the apostles themselves, and that he should thus even after death become the subject with them of the devotions which should be performed in their honour at this place'.[70] Whether Constantine or his fourth-century biographer were truly responsible for this claim to apostolic status is difficult to say. In the opinion of Gilbert Dagron, the well-known French Byzantist, the notion that Constantine was 'equal of the apostles' did indeed originate in the writings of Eusebius, from where it was later picked up by the hymnodists who composed the services for his feast day, a process he believes to have taken place by the mid-sixth century.[71] In modern times, the epithet, 'equal of the apostles', is used in the eastern church to describe an entire typological class of saints, among whom number Mary Magdalene, the empress Helena, Nina of Georgia, Patrick of Ireland, Prince Vladimir and Princess Olga of Kiev, Innocent of Alaska, and many others. No such official honorific existed in the early Middle Ages, however, and it remains unclear how and when it came to be applied to saints other than Constantine. Yet regardless of how the designation was used in later centuries, it appears that the emperor alone was deemed worthy of such high esteem in the churches of Byzantium and early Rus.

The church books therefore depict Constantine in a unique manner. Unlike the earliest apostles, who nearly all died as martyrs, Constantine was not a victim in this world, but a victor. He did not sacrifice himself for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Rather, he received an earthly empire directly from 'the emperor of all', Jesus Christ:

Пьрвыи покореба • пьрфоуроу приснопамѧть цесарю • волею хрьста ты познавъ • бога же и цьсарѧ • вьсѣхъ благодѣтелю • вьсѧкомоу началоу • и власти прѣбольшааго • тѣмь ти хрьстолюбьче • цьсарѣство оуправивъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе доушам[ъ наш].[72]

You were the first to submit the royal purple to Christ, O ever-memorable emperor. You willingly came to know God, the King, the benefactor of all, the

[70] Cited from C. M. Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (London, 2004), p. 271.
[71] G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 143–44.
[72] Sin. 166, 124.2.

greatest of every authority and power. Wherefore, you were granted an empire, O Christ-lover, by merciful Jesus, the saviour of our souls.

Безначальне бесъмьртьне цьсарю • цьсарьства вышьнꙗаго съподоби • ꙗкоже дрѣвле • благочьстивьно оправьдана земли • цьсарьствовати господи • тебе възлюбльшаꙗ • въ истиноу еленоу свꙗтоую и костꙗнтина великааго • еюже оущедри ны вьсꙗ молитвами.[73]

O immortal King without beginning, you have vouchsafed the kingdom on high unto those whom of old you endowed with authority to reign over the earth in piety: the holy Helena and Constantine the Great, who truly loved you. Through their prayers, O Lord, have compassion on all.

Влѣкомъ на распꙗтие творьць • сълньцю и създанию • тꙗ ꙗко звѣздоу свѣтьлоу съ небесе • звѣздами влѣкомъ • и държавѣ пьрвеи • цесарьство положилъ есть • тѣмь тꙗ хвалимъ • костꙗнтине цесарю благочьстиве • съ еленою материю • богомоудрою • молита сꙗ христоу • о праздьноующиихъ вѣрою • и любъвию памꙗть.[74]

He who was drawn up upon the cross, the Creator of the sun and all creation, drew you close through the stars from heaven, since you were yourself like a shining star, and entrusted the royal dominion to you first of all. Wherefore, we praise you, O pious emperor Constantine, together with your godly wise mother, Helena. Pray to Christ for all those who celebrate your memory with faith and love.

Constantine may have worn the imperial diadem, but that did not prevent him from imitating the deeds of the twelve and the seventy. In the hymnography, he is specially called to apostolic service from above and given a very powerful gift, a matchless weapon with which he might conquer all visible and invisible enemies. That weapon was the cross:

Ороужие крепъко • цьсареви нашемоу дасть • крьстъ твои чьстьныи • имьже цьсарьствова • на земли правьдьно • сиꙗвъ вѣрою • цьсарьства небесьнааго съподобисꙗ милосьрдьемь си • съ нимиже ти човѣколюбьное • съмотрение славимъ • исусе милостивыи съпасе доушамъ наш.[75]

You gave a mighty weapon to our emperor Constantine, your precious cross, by which he reigned on earth righteously, shone forth in faith, and has been vouchsafed the kingdom of heaven by your loving-kindness. With them [*sic*], we glorify your loving dispensation, O merciful Jesus, the Saviour of our souls.

Or as another hymn described it:

[73] *Ibid.*, 130.1. [74] *Ibid.*, 125.2. [75] *Ibid.*, 124.1–2.

Цьсаремъ цьсарь и богъ • богатыими даръми • оукрашаꙗ достоиныꙗ • тъ съ небеси • ѧкоже павьла прѣпѣтааго • знамениемь крьстьныимь • тѧ костѧнтине ꙋлови • тѣмь рекъ побѣжаи врагы твоꙗ • егоже възискавъ • съ материю богомꙋдрою • и обрѣтъ ѧкоже желааше • сиѧ държавою побѣдилъ еси • съ тою оубо молисꙗ • за правовѣрьныꙗ цьсарѧ • и за хрьстолюбивыѧ люди • и за вьсѧ творꙗщаѧ ти • памѧть вѣрьно • единомоу чловѣколюбьцю • избавитисѧ отъ вьсѧкого гнѣва.[76]

God, the King of kings, who adorns the worthy with rich gifts, captured you from heaven with the sign of the cross, as he had the all-praised Paul, O Constantine, saying: 'By this vanquish your enemies.' And having sought [the cross] with your divinely wise mother, and found it as you desired, you conquered with its might. With her, therefore, entreat him who alone loves mankind for the right-believing kings and the Christ-loving people, and for all who faithfully celebrate your memory, that they may be delivered from all wrath.

In this instance, the hymnography connected the emperor's famous vision of a cross shining in the sky with the legend of his mother's discovery of the 'true cross' in Jerusalem in the year 327. This motif appears throughout the church services, perhaps most prominently in the canon of the feast:

Хрьстоу сѧ прилѣпльшии на ньже прѣчистаꙗ • вьсю възложивъши надежю • свѧтыихъ его • доиде мѣстъ на нихъже • свѧтыѧ страсти въплъщьшасѧ прѣтьрпѣ прѣблагыи.

Cleaving unto Christ and setting all your hope upon him, O most pure [Helena], you reached his sacred places where he, the exceedingly good one, suffered the immaculate passion in the flesh.

Съпасено ороужие неподвижимоу побѣдоу • крьстьꙗнъ оупование • крьста чьстьнааго • крыема завистию • ты ѧви божиемь • палима рачениемь богоблаженаѧ.

O divinely blessed [Helena], burning with godly zeal, you revealed the weapon of salvation, the indestructible trophy, the hope of Christians, the most honourable cross, which through envy had been hidden.

ꙗвлѧеши крые мое . въ мънозѣхъ лѣтѣхъ божествьноую побѣдоу крьста . имьже съпасохомъсѧ . и бѣсъ льсти . избавлени есмъ.[77]

You discovered the divine trophy of the cross, hidden for many years, whereby we are saved and have been delivered from the lusts of the demons.

The notion that the cross is a weapon, given by God to a chosen ruler, so that he may drive away the demons and defeat his political enemies, is

[76] *Ibid*., 126.1–2. [77] *Ibid*., 127.1–2.

also conveyed at another feast in the liturgical calendar. Each year on 7 May, the clergy in Constantinople and Kiev celebrated a festival which appears in the service books as 'The memory of when the sign of the cross appeared over the holy city at the third hour of the day in the reign of the emperor Constantine'.[78] During the services for this feast, the choirs sang about a 'weapon of peace, of invincible might', whilst commemorating the miraculous appearance of a gigantic cross in the skies above Constantinople, 'which shone more brightly than the sun'.[79] During the canon, the clergy once again praised the cross as a 'sceptre of victory' and chanted odes such as this:

Въсиıалъ еси на земли • лоуча крьстьныѧ • имьже дьıавола попьравъ • и чловѣчь родъ • съпаслъ еси господи • егоже ради поемъ славоу твою.

The rays of the cross poured out upon the earth, O Lord, and by them you trampled down the devil and saved the race of man. Wherefore, we sing of your glory.

As these examples illustrate, the hymns in honour of the cross promoted much the same political theology as those for Saints Constantine and Helena. In both cases, God and the devil were at war in the post-apostolic era. The Lord's special warrior in the contest, His chosen successor to the original apostles, was none other than the emperor of Rome. Thus, in the mythology of the Byzantine rite, Saint Constantine wielded the 'true cross' and the 'orthodoxy of the apostles' in order to liberate the universe from the power of Satan, while also defeating enemies of a more visible, this-worldly nature.

A NEW CONSTANTINE IN RUS

The chronicle account for the year 983 is fascinating because the devil himself recognized and proclaimed these very ideas about the apostles and their imperial imitator. In the chronicle text, the evil one rejoiced at the death of the Varangians and believed that he had a permanent habitation in Rus precisely because the apostles never preached there. The devil acknowledged that the teaching of the apostles had enlightened the world and freed it from his captivity. But what the devil did not realize, and what the pious declamations in the final lines of the passage made plain, is that the apostles' special successor, Constantine, was also endowed with

[78] On the history of the liturgical commemorations of the cross, see Louis van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross: Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy* (Leuven, 2000).

[79] Sin. 166, 129.2.

these powers and that his apostolic deeds could be duplicated in foreign lands. The Roman emperor shared in the grace and authority of the apostles and so too would Prince Vladimir. Soon, in the year 988, he would be called by God to drive the devil out of the land of Rus as a bishop and king.

According to the chronicle, 'at this time the Rus were ignorant pagans', but the evil one's 'ruin was approaching'. The devil's demise is imminent, moreover, because he will soon 'be driven out by the *true cross*' (emphasis mine):

тако бо тщашесѧ погубити родъ хесꙗскии. но прогонимъ бѧше х҃мъ чтснмъ. и в онѣх странахъ. сде же мнѧшес ѡканьныи. ꙗко сде ми есть жилище. сде бо не суть апсли оучили. ни прр҃ци прорекли. не и вѣдыи прр҃ка глща. инарекъ не люди моꙗ люди моꙗ. ѡ аплх бо реч. во всю землю изидоша вѣщаньꙗ их. и в конец(ь) вселеныꙗ гл҃и ихъ. аще и тѣлом апсли не суть не были. но оученьꙗ ихъ. аки трубы гласѧть по вселенѣи в цр҃квхъ. имьже оученьемь побѣжаемъ. противнаго врага. попирающе подъ нози ꙗкоже попраста и си ѡтѣника. приемше (в) ѣнець нбсныи съ ст҃ми мч҃нки и прв҃дники.[80]

[The devil] yearned to destroy the Christian people, but he was driven out by the true cross, even from other lands. 'Here', the accursed one reasoned, 'I shall have for myself a home, since the apostles have not taught here, nor the prophets prophesied.' He did not know that the prophet had said, 'I will call those my people who are not my people.' And that it is said of the apostles, 'Their message has gone out into all the earth and their words to the end of the universe.' For even if the apostles themselves were never here in the body, their teachings nevertheless resound like trumpets in churches throughout the world. By their instruction, we triumph over the adversarial enemy, trampling him under our feet, as these two holy fathers also did, having received the heavenly crown with the holy martyrs and the righteous.

The chroniclers introduced their counterargument to the devil's statement with a telling phrase, 'He did not know.' By using this juxtaposition, they set up an interesting situation. The devil knew, presumably from first-hand experience, that the apostles had the power to expel him. But he did not know that the true cross and the instruction of the apostles also possessed this power. As should by now be apparent, these phrases introduce an important liturgical subtext to the passage, since the true cross was a weapon given by God exclusively to Saint Constantine, a chosen ruler endowed with what was interpreted as apostolic kingship.

The chroniclers further hinted at their intentions in the citations. The first, 'I will call those my people who are not my people', comes from the

80 *PVL*, 83, 12–25.

book of Hosea, although it is far better known from the ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Coincidence or not, in a passage that foretells Vladimir's role in the conversion of Rus, the chroniclers used a citation from an apostolic letter concerning the Lord's mysterious plans for the conversion of the gentiles. The second citation more clearly reveals the liturgical sources of the chronicler's argument. The text reads, 'it is said of the apostles, "Their message has gone out into all the earth and their words to the end of the universe."' This verse is from the nineteenth psalm, where it has no relation to the apostles. The chroniclers, clerics immersed in the daily practice of the Byzantine rite, linked the psalm to the apostles because it was the main *prokeimenon* verse sung at every feast for each of the twelve apostles during the liturgical year.[81] In contemporary church books, moreover, the same verse is chanted at feasts commemorating all 'equals of the apostles', including Constantine, Helena, Vladimir, and Olga.

This connection between the salvation of Rus and the preaching of the apostles, and equal of the apostles, is foregrounded again in the next sentence. 'For even if the apostles themselves were never here in the body, their teaching nevertheless resounds like trumpets in churches throughout the world. By their instruction, we triumph over the adversarial enemy.' Earlier, it was noted that the services describe certain of the apostles as a 'trumpet of theology', as an instrument of the divine word. The chronicle takes the analogy a step further. Though the time of the apostles has passed, their teaching continued 'to resound like trumpets' in liturgical services performed 'in churches throughout the world': services that enabled the faithful to 'overcome the hostile adversary' like the apostles of old.

The underlying implication here is that *someone* will bring these services to Rus. *Someone* will build the churches in which they are celebrated. *Someone* will expel the devil with the true cross. For those acquainted with the Byzantine liturgical past, the chronicle is making the very specific promise that a 'new Constantine' will soon appear in the land of Rus and convert the realm to the Byzantine faith. These events, as well as the identity of this new apostle-king, are vaguely foreshadowed at the beginning of the passage, when the chronicle describes the location of the martyrdom: 'Now there was a certain Varangian whose house was situated by the spot where now stands the Church of the Holy Virgin built by Vladimir.'[82] For an early medieval audience, this remark was particularly meaningful. It signalled that the Varangians would die as

[81] *TAS*, ed. A. M. Pentkovskii (Moscow, 2001), pp. 296, 299, 342–43, 346–47, 351.
[82] *PVL*, 82, 11–13.

martyrs and, in Tertullian's famous phrase, their blood would be 'the seed of the church'.[83] Thirteen years later, in the year 996, the very ruler who oversaw their death built and personally consecrated the Church of the Tithes on the spot where they had perished.

Understood in its native liturgical context, therefore, the Tale of the Varangian Martyrs proves to be substantially more than a saint's life. It concludes with a series of liturgical allusions, mostly concerning the apostles and Saint Constantine, which herald the imminent appearance of a Christian saviour in the land of Rus. Yet before Prince Vladimir could accomplish 'the deeds of Constantine' as an apostle-king, he had first to undergo a conversion similar to that of the emperor. The chronicler therefore began this story two years later in the annals for 986.

THREE CONVERSIONS: PAUL, CONSTANTINE, VLADIMIR

In the divine services of the Byzantine church, Constantine's religious transformation was represented as a momentous, instantaneous, and miraculous event. On the eve of battle, the emperor saw a vision of the cross in the sky and went on to conquer his enemies with the aid of the Christian God. At the same time, he experienced life-changing inner revelations about the nature of the divinity, revelations similar to those experienced by the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus.[84] It is no coincidence that this narrative from the twenty-sixth chapter of the Book of Acts was also the epistle reading for the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helena.[85] At the divine liturgy served on that day, just after chanting several hymns about Constantine's conversion, the reader took up the Apostol, the church book containing selections from the canonical apostolic writings, and turned to the reading stipulated in the typicon.[86] The officiating deacon announced, 'Wisdom', from the altar and the reader loudly responded, 'The reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.' The priest answered with the words, 'Let us attend', after which the reader began with a standard formula used to preface such readings, 'In those days . . . '.[87] He then read the appointed pericope:

[83] Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, ed. A. Souter and J. E. Bickersteth Mayor (Cambridge, 1917).

[84] Nazarenko, *Drevniaia Rus' na mezhdunarodnykh putiakh,* pp. 435–51. Senderovich, 'Sv. Vladimir: K mifopoezisu', pp. 303–10.

[85] *TAS*, p. 345.

[86] For a bibliography of the scholarship on this liturgical book, see N. V. Kvlividze, 'Apostol', in *PE* (Moscow, 2009), vol. III, pp. 95–98.

[87] T. I. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v slavianskoi traditsii (po sluzhebnikam XI–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 2015), p. 417. On the reading of the Gospel and Apostol in Byzantium and Rus, see A. A. Alekseev, *Bibliia v bogosluzhenii: Vizantiisko-slavianskii lektsionarii* (St Petersburg, 2008).

Агрипь цр҃ь кь павлоу рече. велѧ ти ѿ себе гл҃ати. тьгда простерь рѫкѧ ѿвѣщаваше. Ѡ всемь о немже поемь и приѧ мѧ ѿ юдеи цр҃ю агрипо непщоуе себе бл҃жена прѣ(д) тобою. ѿвѣть творити дн(с)ь. Паче же оумѣтелина те соуша всѣмь июдеискимь ѡбычѣемь же и стезаниемь. тѣмже млюсе сь трьпѣниемь послоушати мене. Житие оубо мое еже ѿ юности мое. бывшее испрьва вь езыцѣ моемь вь иерл(с)мѣ вѣдоуть вси живоде. И знающеи ме испьрва аще хотеть свѣ(д)тельствовати, ꙗко по истѣи ереси нш҃ѥи и жихь фарисѣнскыи . . . И на всѣхь сьньмищихь многащи моуче е ноуж(д)ахь хоулити. ихже излиха враж(д)оуе на не гонѣ(х) и до внѣшнихь гра(д). В нихже нии вь дамаскь сь ѡбастиѧ и повелѣниемь еже ѿ архиереи. К полоудне на пѧти видѣхь цр҃оу агрипоу с нб҃сь паче сиѣниѣ слнц҃наго ѡсиѣвьшоу мѧ свѣтоу идѧщемже сь мноѧ. Всѣм же намь падъшемь на пѫти. слышахомь се гла(с) рекшии мнѣ гл҃ѭщь евреискымь гласомь. саоуле саоуле что мѧ гониши. жестого ти е на ражень настѫпати. Азь же рѣхь. что еси г҃и. г҃ь же рече азь есмь ис҃сь. его же ты гониши. Нѫ стани на ногоу своею. сего бо ради ꙗвихь ти сѧ сьтворити тѧ слоугѫ и свѣдѣтелѣ. ꙗже видѣ ꙗвлѣѧ ти. И избавлѣѧ тѧ ѿлю(д)еи і ѿ ꙗзыкь. вь нѧ же азь послѧ тѧ. ѿврѣсти ѡчи имь. и ѡбратитисѧ ѿ тмы на свѣть. и ѿ области неприѣзниныѫ кь бг҃у. приѧти имь ѡставление грѣхом. и достоѣние ст҃ыхь вѣроѫ. ѣже ѡ мнѣ. Тѣмже цр҃ю агрипе не бы противень нб҃сномоу видѣнию.[88]

Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'You are permitted to speak for yourself.' Then Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 'I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before you, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews, especially because I know you to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews. Wherefore I beseech you to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews. Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most strait sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee . . . And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme. And being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O Agrippa, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, we heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for

88 Archimandrite Amfilokhii (Sergievskii-Kazantsev), *Drevleslavianskii Karpinskii apostol XIII veka s grecheskim tekstom 1072 goda, slichennyi po drevnim pamiatnikam slavianskim XI–XVII v.* (Moscow, 1887), pp. 632–44.

this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness, both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the [Jewish] people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me. Therefore, king Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.'

The fact that this epistle was read on Constantine's feast day suggests that the emperor's miraculous vision before the battle of the Milvian Bridge was of the same kind, and of the same importance, as Paul's miraculous vision on the road to Damascus. A comparable claim is made in several places in the hymnography of the feast. In a song cited above, for example, God is said to have captured Constantine 'with the sign of the cross, as he had the all-glorious Paul'. Another hymn, from the canon at matins, puts forward a similar idea:

Съ небеси ѧко павьла тѧ • дрѣвле оулавлѧеть хрьстосъ богъ • костѧнтине научаю тѧ • цьсарѧ того • единого чисти.[89]

Christ God caught you from heaven, just like he did Paul of old, O Constantine, teaching you to reverence him alone as king.

In a third hymn, the saintly emperor is again portrayed as a 'chosen vessel', as one who has been captured and transformed in miraculous fashion:

Цьсарьствоую тварию • покорьливою прозьрѧ благо • сърдьца твоего прѣмоудре словесно оулови тѧ • бесловесиемь одьржима • помазавъ твои разоумъ • благочьстию разоумъмь • мирови показалъ еси • ѧко сълньце златозарьно • сиѧниѧ божествьнаю поущаю • дѣѧнии славьне.[90]

He who rules creation foresaw your obedience and goodness of heart, and through reason captured you, when unreason ruled over you. And having anointed your mind with knowledge of godly piety, he showed you to the world as a shining sun that sends forth beams of godly deeds, O glorious one.

In other places in the service, as we observed earlier, God spoke directly to the emperor, gave him the true cross, and told him to conquer his enemies with it. When the political leader obeyed, triumph soon followed:

Повелѣниѧ твоѭ хранѧ • повиноусѧ костѧнтинъ законоу ти • безаконьна разори • опълчению въпию • благословленъ еси.[91]

[89] Sin. 166, 127.2. [90] *Ibid*., 125.1. [91] *Ibid*., 128.2.

Keeping your commandments, Constantine submitted himself to your law. He therefore destroyed the battalions of the lawless, as he cried to you, 'Blessed are you, [O Lord of our fathers].'

These hymns combine key motifs from the story of Paul's conversion with details of Constantine's military conquest. Like Paul, God appeared unto Constantine in a vision of light in order to make him a minister and witness to the gentiles, 'to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God'. Also like Paul, Constantine was 'not disobedient to the heavenly vision'. He heeded the unexpected message and committed himself to the service of the Christian God.

The liturgical feast spells out these parallels in order to claim that Paul was specially called from above by Christ to be the twelfth disciple, and that nearly 300 years later Constantine was called in much the same way. Thus, even Constantine's claim to apostleship is constructed on the precedent of an earlier sacred narrative. In the New Testament, the church recounted the story of Paul's unusual election into the ranks of the apostles, and centuries later Byzantine hymnographers appropriated the narrative to justify Constantine's elevation to a similar rank. The myth's development did not end there, however. A few more centuries passed, the story was translated into Slavonic, and it eventually came to be chanted throughout the land of Rus at the liturgical services for Constantine and Helena. The clerical editors of the *Rus Primary Chronicle* celebrated this feast every year on 21 May, and, as time went on, the service taught them an important hagiographical lesson.

The clerics learned that to construct a proper argument for Vladimir's glorification, they needed only to employ the methods developed by earlier Byzantine hymnodists. The feast proclaimed Constantine to be 'equal of the apostles' because he had been converted like Paul and had helped to carry on the apostle's mission to the gentiles. Using the same logic, the chroniclers could also proclaim Vladimir to be 'equal of the apostles' by writing a conversion narrative for him that was similar to those of Paul and Constantine. Once this liturgical logic is uncovered, moreover, the series of events in the chronicle entries from 986 to 988 can be interpreted in an entirely new light. In particular, the motivations that might have prompted the editors to merge the Kiev legend with the Cherson legend begin to come into focus, perhaps for the first time. If Vladimir were to have been responsible for the conversion of the Rus in the same fashion that Constantine had presided over the triumph of Christianity for the Romans, then it was not possible for the prince to accept baptism from the hands of a Greek philosopher, passively and

obediently. A new narrative, with a more heroic and more liturgical presentation of Vladimir, was required. A 'new Constantine' was not converted by human reasoning, after all, but rather called from on high by the creator of all.

This notion that God calls unbelievers to apostolic service appears throughout the hymnography for Paul and Constantine. In Paul's case, particular stress was laid on his initial persecution of the church and subsequent repentance:

Хоульникъ и гонитель бысть цьркъви павьле преблажене • съ небесе призъванъ застоупилъ еси • сию же преславьноу • юже и нынѣ моли • избавити стадо свое ѡт бѣдъ • и съпасти доуша наша.[92]

You were a tormenter and persecutor of the Church, O most blessed Paul, but when you were called from heaven, you defended it gloriously. Pray now that your flock be delivered from misfortunes and save our souls.

Паоуле оуста господьнѧ • степень оучениѧ • инъгда оубо гонитель • иисоуса съпаса • нынѣ же и пьрвопрестольнъ • апостоломъ бывъ блажене тѣмь не издрѣченьныѧ видѣ моудре.[93]

O blessed and wise Paul, mouth of the Lord and foundation of teaching, once you were the persecutor of Jesus the Saviour, but now you have become the first-enthroned of the apostles and have seen unspeakable things.

Like Paul, Constantine was praised for 'passing from unbelief to belief' and for following the divine call and forsaking the religion he was born into:

Въздании небесьныихъ оулоучи ти потъщасѧ • тѣмь зовоущемоу богомоудрьно послѣдова • и тьмоу остави отьче прѣданию льсти • и свѣтило божиемь д8хъмь бысть.[94]

You were diligent to gain heavenly rewards. Therefore, O Constantine, you followed god-mindedly after him that called you, and forsaking the darkness of your father's error, you became a lamp of the divine spirit.

Other places in the service for Constantine suggest that God pursues his chosen ones, and one hymn even describes God hunting the emperor like prey:

Не отъ чловѣкъ наречение приꙗтъ • нъ ꙗко богогласьныи паулъ • имѣꙗше паче славьно се • съвыше костѧнтине вьседоблии отъ христа бога • знамение бо крьста на небеси видѣвъ • в и тѣмь оуловленъ бывъ • ꙗко добраꙗ ловитва симь побѣдитель • на видимыꙗ и не видимыꙗ врагы • ꙗви сѧ не побѣдимъ • тѣмь молимъ тѧ • ꙗко молитвьника

[92] Sof. 384, 64.1. [93] *Ibid.*, 60.1. [94] Sin. 166, 126.2–127.1.

теплааго • земльнии достоино памѧть твою чьтоуще • дьрзновение испроси намъ • просвѣщение оцѣщение и велию милость.[95]

You did not receive your calling from a person, but like the divinely voiced Paul, you received it from above from Christ God, O most-brave Constantine. For beholding the sign of the cross in the sky, you were caught like goodly prey, and were shown to be an invincible victor over enemies visible and invisible. Wherefore, we on earth, who worthily celebrate your memory, entreat you as a fervent intercessor, that you request for us boldness, enlightenment, purification, and great mercy.

Prince Vladimir's situation in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* is similar to that of his typological models. Like Paul, he had persecuted Christians, and like Constantine, he was born into a pagan faith. There is also evidence that he was being pursued by God: in 986, a Greek philosopher was sent to the court in Kiev and in 987 Vladimir's emissaries were granted a vision of 'heaven on earth' in Constantinople. The most convincing parallels, however, occur in the entry for 988, when the prince laid siege to Cherson. That Vladimir's conversion occurred during a military campaign is to be expected, since that is also the story the liturgy tells about Saint Constantine. In fact, nearly every hymn on the emperor's feast day connected his conversion to the events preceding the battle of the Milvian Bridge.

The feast presents the emperor's conversion as the necessary result of an empirical proof concerning the Christian God. The cross appears in the sky as the sign by which Constantine will conquer. He conquers using that sign as his battle standard. Ergo, the God of the Christians is the true God. A comparable proof is built into the story of Vladimir's siege of Cherson. The prince of Kiev also received a 'sign' from on high when Anastasius shot an arrow into the enemy camp with instructions on how to take the city. Upon reading the instructions, Vladimir made a vow based on the same logic that governs the hymnography for Constantine. Raising his eyes to heaven, the prince declared, 'If these instructions prove successful, I will be baptised!'[96] As unexpected as Vladimir's pronouncement may be, his underlying deduction is clear. If he conquers with the help of the Christian deity, then that God is necessarily the true God.

Similar reasoning prevailed at Prince Vladimir's baptism following the siege, only this time the subtext was the ninth chapter of the Book of Acts, a text that was read annually in early Rus on 9 October, at the Feast of the Holy and All-praised Apostle Ananais.[97] The selection picks up right after

[95] RNB, Q.p.I.15, 159.1–2. [96] *PVL*, 109, 15–21. [97] *TAS*, p. 287.

Saul/Paul's blinding, when he was 'three days without sight' in the city of Damascus:

Бѣ же единь ѿ оученикь вь дамасцѣ именемь ананиѣ. и рече к немоу г҃ь вь снѣ. анание. ѡн же рече. се азь г҃и. Г҃ь же к немоу ре(ч). вьстании и иди вь стьгины. нарицаѧщѫѧсѧ правыѧ. и вьзыщи вь домоу и(оу)довѣ именемь Фарсѣнина. тои бо (мо)лить(сѧ). И видѣ вьснѣ мѫжа именемь ананиѧ прешедьша. и вьзложьша на нь рѫкѫ да прозрить. ѿвѣщавь же ананиѣ ре(ч). г҃и слышахь ѡ мѫжи семь велико зло сьтвори ст҃ымь твоим вь ерл҃имѣ. И зде имать ѡбласть ѿ архиереи. свѧзати всѧ. иже нарицаѧть имѧ твое. Ре же к немоу г҃ь. иди ꙗко сьсѫдь избраны ми есть. понести имѧ мое прѣдь ѫзыкы и цр҃и. сн҃овь изл҃евь. Азъ бо скажѫ емоу елико по(д)баеть емоу ѡ имени моемь приѧти. Иде ананиѣ и внище вь храмниж. и вьзложи на нь рѫцѣ. и рече савле брате г҃ь посла мѧ исс҃ь. ꙗвлен ти на пѫти по немоу же грѧдѣше. ꙗко да прозриши. и напльнивьсѧ дх҃а ст҃а. И абие ѿпадѫ ѿ очию его ꙗко и чешоуѧ. прозрѣ же абие. и вьставь кр(с)тисѧ. И приемь брашно и ꙋкрѣписѧ.[98]

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and to him the Lord said in a vision, 'Ananias'. And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' So the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called the Tharseian, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.' Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear my name before gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake.' And Ananias went his way and entered the house, and laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once, and he arose and was baptised. So when he had received food, he was strengthened.[99]

The parallels between this passage and the chronicle account are striking. Paul is blinded by a vision of Christ, and Vladimir is blinded by 'divine providence'.[100] Ananias is sent against his will to baptise a dangerous enemy of the faith, and Princess Anna is sent against her will to baptise and marry a dangerous enemy of Byzantium. Paul is miraculously healed the moment Ananias lays hands on him, and Vladimir is miraculously healed as soon as 'the bishop laid his hand upon him'.[101] The two healings also represent a proof of

[98] Sergievskii-Kazantsev, *Drevleslavianskii Karpinskii apostol XIII veka*, pp. 234–41.
[99] Acts 9:9–19. [100] *PVL*, 111, 4–5. [101] *Ibid.*, 13–14.

the Christian God similar to that granted to Constantine. Paul is blinded by Christ and then healed at his command. Likewise, when Princess Anna told Vladimir that baptism would cure his blindness, the prince responded, 'If this proves to be the truth, then the God of the Christians is truly great.'[102] Here again, the Christian God was put to the test and the empirical results verified his divine power.

Hymnography from the feast of Saint Ananias further elaborates on the story of Paul's baptism and reveals another similarity between the apostle and Prince Vladimir. Namely, that being blinded and healed through holy baptism is a revelatory, transformative, and enlightening experience:

Просвѣщенъ разоумъмь бж҃иемь сщ҃нкъ ї мч҃къ ісв҃ъ и бж҃свьныи ап҃лъ . анание . ты бы(с) . инъгда гонителѧ саоула нарицаема . ослѣплена волею вышьнею . славьне . въ водѣ погроузивъ блг҃дтелевъмь наоучениемь лоучьша ꙗвилъ еси свѣтителꙗ д҃шамъ нашимъ. сего ради въпиемъ ти моли х҃а б҃а грѣхо.[103]

Enlightened by divine reason, you were a priest and martyr of Jesus and a divine apostle, O Ananias. Once the persecutor Saul blasphemed, and was blinded by the will of the Most High. But when you submerged [him] in the water by the grace-Giver's command, O glorious one, you revealed him as the enlightener of our souls. Wherefore, we cry out to you: pray to Christ God [to grant remission of] our sins.

Приимовавъ б҃жию зарю • егда волею лючьшею ослѣпленъ • дьрьжимъ древле въ мрацѣ • приде ти саоулъ • бж҃иꙗ просѧ очищениꙗ • тъгда преблажене • ꙗко ст҃ль вѣрьнъ • оусынѧеши кр҃щениемь всю вселеноую по томь ѡсыневавъшааго • тѣмь съ тѣмь бл҃жимъ тѧ • х҃ва ап҃ла • анание мꙋдре • молѧща сꙗ сп҃сти сѧ намъ.[104]

He who of old was held in darkness and received the divine ray, Saul, while he was blinded by the superior will, came to you requesting divine cleansing. Then, O most blessed one, as a wise hierarch, through baptism you made a son of him, who would thereafter adopt the whole universe [as his child]. Wherefore, with him we bless you, O wise apostle of Christ Ananias, who prays that we may be saved.

Still other hymns, from canons composed by Saint Klement of Ohrid, suggest that Paul's conversion experience provided him with special insights into the nature of the triune God:

Непрестоупныꙗ трц҃а . свѣтомь облиставъ сѧ . и падша сѧ ꙗко мрт҃ва . паоуле оумоудри сѧ . гл(с)мь дув҃ьнымь . имьже обьтеце вселеноую ѡгласѧ . и льсть дѣмоньскоую прогонѧꙗ.[105]

[102] *Ibid.*, 9–10. [103] *MSON*, vol. II, p. 1. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[105] O. A. Krasheninnikova, *Drevneslavianskii Okhtoikh sv. Klimenta arkhiepiskopa Okhridskogo* (Moscow, 2006), p. 71.

Surrounded by the light of the unapproachable Trinity, you fell down like one dead, O Paul, and were made wise by the divine voice, which travelled about instructing the universe and expelling the demonic lie.

ѻ трьблж҃ныи павле . самовидѣць бывъ . неизреченьнѣи нб(с)нѣи славе . и раискаго наслаженииѭ вкоушь . емоуже и мене причастника створи . раздрѣшивъ ми всѧ прегрешен(ѧ).[106]

O thrice-blessed Paul, you were a witness of unspeakable heavenly glory and tasted the sweetness of paradise. Make me also a partaker of these things, absolving me of all transgressions.

The chronicler treated Vladimir's conversion in similar fashion. The loss and restoration of his sight was more than merely a physiological event. It was a pathway to spiritual revelation. Like Paul and Constantine, the prince's conversion was not so much a matter of faith as a direct, indubitable, first-hand experience of the divine. In the prince's own words, 'Now I have known the true God.' Here, at last, are the words of a 'new Constantine', and from this phrase forward the *Rus Primary Chronicle* depicts Vladimir as a new and transformed human being. Gone is the lustful, deceitful, marauding pagan warrior of the earlier chronicle entries, and in his place appears a holy prince, an apostle and bishop *ad extra*, on a mission to liberate Rus from the devil and baptise his people into the Byzantine faith.

WAS PRINCE VLADIMIR DEPICTED AS THE FIRST BISHOP OF RUS?

From the moment Prince Vladimir emerged from the baptismal font, he began to imitate the deeds of the emperor-apostle Constantine. While still in Cherson, the prince founded a church and 'selected clerical instruments and icons', before setting off for Kiev with 'the princess and Anastasius and the priests of Cherson, together with the relics of Saint Clement and of Phoebus his disciple'.[107] For those familiar with the liturgical procedures of the Byzantine church, this description of Vladimir's departure is extremely revealing. The prince left Cherson with all of the elements necessary for the founding of an eastern Christian church, namely, the relics of martyrs, clerical vessels, icons, and priests, but with one striking exception. There is no mention of a bishop, and in the Byzantine tradition only a bishop can consecrate a new church.[108]

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 67. [107] *PVL*, 116, 9–12.

[108] For a reconstruction of the early medieval consecration rite, see M. Zheltov, 'Chin osviashcheniia khrama i polozheniia sviatikh moshchei v vizantiiskikh Evkhologiiakh XI veka', in A. M. Lidov (ed.), *Relikvii v isskustve i kul'ture vostochnokhristianskogo mira* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 111–26.

This omission in the chronicle is possibly connected to Constantine's own unique status within the church hierarchy. In the fourth-century *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius recounted the emperor's own attempt at defining his position: 'Once when he was entertaining bishops at a banquet, [Constantine] said ... while you are bishops of the things inside the church, I too am a bishop appointed by God of the things outside it.'[109] Some contemporary scholars, such as the liturgist Robert Taft, interpret this final enigmatic phrase, *episkipos ton ektos*, to mean that Constantine saw himself as entrusted with the external care and protection of the church, a calling that entitled him and future Byzantine sovereigns 'to a quasi-clerical status with special liturgical privileges not shared by other laypersons'.[110] As the elect of God, in later eras Roman rulers were received into the holy of holies by the patriarch and clergy, and the tenth-century Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus even went so far as to say that they entered the sanctuary in order 'to celebrate the liturgy'.[111] Priestly power was so essential to imperial identity, in fact, that in the year 737, in the city of Edessa, a would-be imperial heir could think of no better way to assert his claim than to 'enter the sanctuary and take communion with his own hands on the table of life, according to the custom of the Roman emperors'.[112]

The hymns and prayers of the divine services represent these imperial liturgical privileges rather liberally and at times portray the emperor as a bishop invested with sacramental power. In one of the medieval hymns cited earlier in this chapter, for instance, Constantine is explicitly called a 'priest and king who has mercifully established the church of God'.[113] Later versions of the same hymn, dating to the early modern period, state that he established the church not only with mercy but 'with oil'.[114] The change in phrasing probably alludes to the moment during the rite for consecrating a church, when the bishop blesses the altar table with a special type of oil called holy chrism. This detail is absent from the most ancient Rus manuscripts, but nevertheless there are other indications of Constantine's unique quasi-episcopal status. The scripture

[109] Cited from Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire*, p. 245. For more on Constantine's position within the church, see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 1–5, 89–149; W. Seston, 'Constantine as a Bishop', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 37 (1947), pp. 127–31; D. de Decker and G. Dupuis-Masay. 'L'"episcopat" de l'empereur Constantin', *Byzantion*, 50 (1980), pp. 118–57.

[110] Taft, *Through* their Own Eyes*: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, 2006), pp. 108–109.

[111] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik (Budapest, 1949), vol. I, p. 141.

[112] Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1901), vol. II, pp. 503–504. Cited from Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, pp. 110–11.

[113] Sin. 166, 125.2–126.2. [114] *Minei. Mai* (Moscow, 1978–89), p. 342.

reading stipulated for the emperor's feast day, for example, is a selection from the Gospel of Saint John, which was also read on the feast days commemorating saintly bishops, such as Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia.[115] The typological symbolism of this shared reading, equating the role of Constantine with that of the hierarchs, was surely not lost on the medieval clerics who celebrated these feasts. The sacrality of Constantine's political power was further stressed in a number of other hymns, which sought to link the emperor's authority with the liturgical traditions of the Israelites. In one song, for instance, the emperor is compared to King David and said to have been anointed 'with the oil of the spirit' for both political and ecclesiastical service:

Новыи ты б(с)ы дв҃дъ дѣлъмь • рогъ съвыше излиꙗныи • на црьскыи вьрхъ ти мꙗсла • помаза дх҃мь тѧ прѣславьне • просвѣщеное слово же и г҃ь • ѿнюдоуже приꙗтъ скипетръ • и цр(с)тво нб(с)ное • подаꙗ намъ велию мл(с)ть.[116]

In your deeds, you were a new David, receiving from above the horn of anointment upon your royal head. The Word transcendent in essence and the Lord, anointed you with the spirit, O most glorious one. Therefore, you received the royal sceptre and the heavenly kingdom, and you grant us great mercy.

Other hymns, meanwhile, emphasized Constantine's role in fighting heresy and organizing the first ecumenical council of Nicea in 325:

Събьра богоносьныихъ • отьць блаженыи ликъ прѣславьне • и тѣми костѧнтине • вьсѣхъ вълноуема сьрдьца оутвьржева • едино чьстьно славословити • съ рожьшиимь слово съпрѣстольно.[117]

You gathered the blessed assembly of the god-bearing fathers, O most glorious Constantine, and through them you taught the storm-tossed hearts of all to glorify the Word as equal in honour and throne with the Begetter.

Великъи свѣтильникъ • ꙗвисѧ цр҃кви хв҃ѣ • костѧньтине бл҃жныи • тобою бо паде арии прѣскьврьньныи • низъ ꙗвисѧ правѣи вѣрѣ врагъ • на съньмищихъ побѣди • тѣмь же ти сѧ молимъ къ сп҃су моли за ны • вѣрьно чьтоущимъ тѧ • и памѧть твою дн(с)ь.[118]

Appearing as a great lamp of the church of Christ, O blessed Constantine, at the victorious councils you trampled the most disgraceful Arius, the enemy of the

[115] *TAS*, p. 345. Alekseev, *Bibliia v bogosluzhenii*, p. 216. [116] Sin. 166, 123.2.
[117] *Ibid.*, 128.1.
[118] *Mineia sluzhebnaia na mai*, Sof. 204, 70.2, ed. T. I. Afanas'eva, E. V. Krushel'nitskaia, O. V. Motygin, and A. S. Slutskii, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=26513641 (accessed June 2018).

true faith. Wherefore, we entreat you to pray to the Saviour, for all those who now honour your memory in faith.

What the hymns and readings for the Roman emperor make abundantly clear, therefore, is that Christian sovereigns in the eastern tradition were not merely spectators, standing idly by on the sidelines of religious solemnities. On the contrary, Constantine and his successors were apparently active liturgical participants, celebrating the services shoulder-to-shoulder with the clerics in the altar, and intervening in matters of doctrine and worship at the highest ecclesiastical levels.

Keeping this crucial liturgical context in mind, I should like to propose a new reading of the story of the baptism of Rus. I suggest that the princely retinue departs from Cherson unaccompanied by a Greek *episkipos* for a specific and very significant reason: namely, because the chroniclers wished to depict Prince Vladimir as the first bishop of Kiev, as the man chosen by God to baptise its people and consecrate its churches. I should clarify from the outset that what I am treating here is the historiographical representation of Prince Vladimir and not the real historical figure. I am not suggesting, in any way, that Vladimir was actually the first bishop of Rus, but rather that later chroniclers created a story in which he is portrayed in that fashion. The evidence for such a hypothesis is largely found in two chronicle entries, describing two seminal events in the early Christian history of Rus. The first is the mass baptism of the residents of Kiev in the year 988 and the second is the consecration of the Church of the Tithes in the year 996. In both passages, the prince presided over the liturgical rites and prayed the prayers that an officiating bishop would have prayed at the sacraments of baptism and the consecration of a church. At the mass baptism, Vladimir accompanied the priests into the waters of the Dnieper and 'when the people were baptised', he rejoiced 'that he and his people now knew God'. The prince then 'looked up to heaven' and prayed:

хсе б҃е створивыи нб҃о и землю. призри на новыꙗ люди сиꙗ. и дажь имъ гси оувѣдѣти тобе истиньнаго б҃а. ꙗко же оувѣдѣша страны хсьꙗньскыꙗ. оутверди и вѣру в них праву и несовратьну. и мнѣ помози гси на супротивнаго врага. да надѣꙗсѧ на тѧ. и на твою державу. побѣжю козни ꙗего.[119]

O Christ God, who has created heaven and earth. Look upon these new people, and grant that they may know you, the true God, as other Christian nations have known you. Confirm them in the true and inalterable faith, and help me,

[119] *PVL*, 118, 11–18.

O Lord, against the hostile enemy, so that hoping in you and your might, I may overcome his intrigues.

Vladimir's prayer combined several elements of the bishop's prayers from the Byzantine initiation rites. The prince assumed the traditional posture of prelates at prayer and begins with a standard liturgical address, 'O Christ God' ('Христос Боже'), which the bishop twice uses in the prayers of exorcism.[120] The prince likewise asked God 'to look upon these new people' because the bishop petitioned God several times to gaze upon the neophytes awaiting illumination. In the third exorcism prayer, he asked the Lord 'to look upon your servant' ('призри на раба твоего) and during the Reception into the Catechumenate he prayed, 'Let your eyes ever look upon him with mercy' ('да будут очи твои взирающе на него милостию выни').[121]

Prince Vladimir called his subjects 'new people' because the bishop's prayers repeatedly represent baptism as the entrance into a new and everlasting life. The prelate's final prayer before the immersion ceremony was especially pertinent:

Владыко Господи Боже наш, призови раба твоего, [имярек], ко святому твоему просвещению, и сподоби его великия сея благодати святаго твоего крещения. Отреши его ветхость, и обнови его в живот вечный.[122]

O Master, Lord our God, call your servant, [name], to your holy illumination and vouchsafe him that great grace of your holy Baptism. Put off from him the old nature and renew him unto life everlasting.

Vladimir's next request, that his subjects may know 'the true God', most probably derives from the bishop's prayers during the short service that marked the start of the second catechetical period. Christ is referred to as the 'true God' three times during this ritual, and one prayer explicitly requests that God 'fill [the neophyte] with the faith, hope and love which are in you, that he may know that you are the only true God'.[123]

Vladimir's concluding petition is a slight reworking of a line from the bishop's first prayer at the Chrismation service. In the chronicle, the prince asked God to 'confirm his people in the true faith' and save him from the 'intrigues' of the evil one. During the sacrament, the bishop prays:

Сохрани его в твоем освящении, утверди в православной вере, избави от лукаваго, и всех начинаний его.[124]

[120] M. Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', *Simvol*, 19 (1988), p. 82.
[121] *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77. [122] *Ibid.*, p. 88. [123] *Ibid.*, p. 81. [124] *Ibid.*

Preserve him in your sanctification, confirm him in the orthodox faith, and deliver him from the evil one and all his machinations.

These parallels are evidence enough that the author of the 988 passage is using the same narrative technique employed in the entry for 955 to depict Princess Olga's baptism. In that passage, the patriarch and princess acted out the roles of baptiser and baptised, as described in the liturgical rubrics. These same rubrics were put to use again in 988, as Prince Vladimir entered the Dnieper and baptised his people with the prayers and gestures traditionally performed by the hierarchs of the Byzantine church.

Following the mass baptism, Prince Vladimir continued to perform the duties of a bishop and 'new Constantine'. He ordered 'churches to be built where idols previously stood' and assigned 'priests throughout the cities', inviting 'the people to accept baptism in all the cities and towns'.[125] These activities also reflect Constantine's deeds in the services:

Благочьстивааго костѧнтина памѧть • ꙗко миро проливаемо • дьньсь въсиѧла есть • христа бога възлюбивъ • идолы приобидѣ • цьркъвь оуставилъ есть на земли распьнъшюоумоу сѧ насъ ради • на небеси же въсприѧ оупованиѧ вѣньць.[126]

The memory of the pious Constantine has shone forth today, poured out like myrrh. For having loved Christ God, he spurned the idols and established a church on earth for the One crucified for our sake. [Wherefore] he receives the crown of hope in heaven.

The chronicler showed Vladimir imitating the Roman emperor's church-building efforts in the year 989, when the prince ordered the construction of 'a church dedicated to the Holy Mother of God', a temple which would later be known as the Church of the Tithes.[127] Seven years later, 'seeing that the church had been completed', the prince entered it and prayed a second episcopal prayer:

г҃си б҃е призри с н҃бсе. и вижь. и посѣти винограда своѥго. и сверши ꙗже насади десница твоꙗ. новы(ꙗ) люди си. им же ѡбратилъ ѥси срдце в разум. познати тебе б҃а истинного. и призри на цр҃квь твою си. юже создах недостоиныи рабъ твои. въ имѧ рожьшаꙗ тѧ матере. присноⷣвыꙗ б҃ца. аже кто (п)омолитьсѧ въ ц҃ркви сеи. то оу(с)лыши мл҃тву ѥго. мл҃твы ради прчстыꙗ б҃ца.[128]

O Lord God, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit your vineyard, and perfect that which your right hand has planted. Make these new people, whose heart you have turned to knowledge, to know you as the true God. And look

[125] *PVL*, 118, 19–25. [126] Sin. 166, 125.1–2. [127] *PVL*, 121, 25–26. [128] *PVL*, 124, 9–18.

upon this your church which I, your unworthy servant, have built in the name of the Mother who bore You, the ever-virgin Mother of God. That whoever may pray in this church, you would hear their prayers, for the sake of the prayers of the immaculate Mother of God.

The opening verse of this prayer unequivocally confirms Prince Vladimir's depiction in the chronicle as the first bishop of Rus. At the celebration of a hierarchical divine liturgy in early Rus, during the thrice-holy hymn (*трисвятое*), the bishop came out from the altar, stood upon the ambo, and blessed the congregation with two special candles, a *dikirion* and *trikirion*. As he performed the blessing, the bishop looked to heaven, raised his hands, and prayed Psalm 80:14–15, the verse with which Prince Vladimir began the prayer above:

Г(с)и . . . призри съ нбси и вижь • и посѣти виногра(д)а своего і сверши • иже насаді десница твоꙗ.[129]

O Lord . . . look down from heaven, and behold, and visit your vineyard, and perfect that which your right hand has planted.

Perhaps no other liturgical prayer was so connected with the figure of the bishop as this prayer. It was one of the few prayers publicly recited in front of the entire congregation at a hierarchical divine liturgy that was never recited at a non-hierarchical service. The chronicler went to great lengths, therefore, to portray Vladimir explicitly as the officiating bishop who consecrated the Church of the Tithes.

The next line of the prayer, 'Make these new people, whose heart you have turned to knowledge, to know you as the true God', returns to the 'new people' motif from Vladimir's earlier baptism prayer, and it probably derives from the baptismal service. In one of the final prayers before baptism, for instance, the bishop expressed a similar sentiment:

О Господи спасе наш иже всем хотяй спастися и в разум истины приити, возсияти свет разума в сердцых (sic) наших . . .[130]

O Lord, our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, shine the light of knowledge in our hearts . . .

Vladimir was blessing a church, however, not baptising a nation, and the concluding phrases of his prayer correspond to the prayers of consecration for a church. The prince asked God to look down on the church that he, an unworthy servant, had built in the name of the Theotokos and to

[129] Sin. 600, l. 19 ob.-20. Cited from M. Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', *BT*, 41 (2007), pp. 272–359.
[130] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p 86.

hearken to the prayers of those who will pray therein. Similar petitions were made throughout the consecration service, but two prayers in particular reflected the prince's concerns. In the 'opening prayer for the consecration of a church' (*начальная молитва освящения храма*), the bishop asked that God would receive the prayer of his 'unworthy servants', so that they may 'complete the consecration of this church . . . built in the name of the holy [name of saint to which the church is dedicated]'.[131] And in the 'prayer at the bowing of heads' (*коленопреклонная молитва освяшения храма*), the bishop petitioned God to look upon the church and hear the prayers offered by the faithful:

> . . . во еже быти очесами твоим отверстым нань день и нощь, и ушесам твоим внемлющим в молитву приходящих в него со страхом твоим и благоговеинством, и призывающих всечестное и покланяемое имя твое: да елика воспросят у тебе, и услышиши на небеси горе, и сотвориши, и милостив будеши.[132]

> . . . let your eyes be open upon it day and night, and let your ears be heedful of the prayer of those who shall enter therein in your fear, and in devoutness, and shall call upon your all honourable and worshipful name. That whatsoever they shall ask, you will hear it in heaven above and grant it, and will show mercy [unto them].

It is worth noting that these consecration prayers from the Euchologion are themselves loosely modelled on Solomon's prayers from the Book of Kings, specifically, from the passage where the Jewish leader stands before the assembly of Israel and dedicates his magnificent new temple in Jerusalem.[133] The similarities between this chapter of the Old Testament and the chronicle text have led some scholars, such as Igor Danilevskii, to conclude that the Bible was therefore the main direct inspiration for Vladimir's depiction in the 996 account.[134] Such an attribution is not merely anachronistic: it also betrays a misunderstanding of the way that Holy Scripture was promulgated and experienced in early Rus. Indeed, a failure to realize the role of the liturgy as the essential vehicle for biblical ideas has long prevented scholars from reading the chronicle in its full, native, ecclesiastical context. Closer examination of the typicon and the occasions on which this particular biblical passage was read during the liturgical year, however, exposes an additional layer of meanings and motivations which undoubtedly guided the chroniclers' pens. The lection about Solomon's temple, for example, was not read on

131 Zheltov, 'Chin osviashcheniia khrama', p. 114.
132 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
133 1 Kings 8:22–61 in the modern printed Bible.
134 Danilevskii, *Povest' vremennykh let,* p. 104.

just any regular feast day in early Rus. It was proclaimed at the evening services for the Dormition of the Mother of God on 15 August, the patronal feast day (*престольный праздник*) of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev.[135] Thus, in the minds of the very men responsible for writing the chronicle, Solomon's high priestly prayer for the temple in Jerusalem was deeply connected to the liturgical commemoration of the Theotokos, a fact which probably explains Vladimir's insistence on remembering the Virgin in his own prayer, whilst consecrating his own new temple in Kiev.

There is one final feast that might have also influenced Prince Vladimir's depiction in the annals for 996, although this attribution is considerably more speculative than the previous two. In the *Typicon of the Great Church*, there is evidence of a liturgical service commemorating the emperor Constantine's dedication of the city of Constantinople on 11 May, in the year 330. No such service appears in the early medieval Rus church books, however, and it is impossible to say with any certainty whether the chroniclers were familiar with this ceremony. In fact, it might have been better to err on the side of caution and assume that they knew nothing of this feast, if not for a rather curious fact. According to Konstantin Aken'tev, 11 May was also the date on which both the Church of the Tithes, and later the Cathedral of Saint Sophia, were officially dedicated.[136] The extant Slavonic-language manuscripts indicate that a service for the holy martyr Mocius was celebrated on this day, but such a minor feast would hardly have justified the consecration of the two greatest cathedrals in the land of Rus. There must have been another reason that this specific date was chosen, therefore, and perhaps that reason is connected to the traditions in Constantinople.

Each year on 11 May, the patriarch presided over several services that emphasized Mary's unique role as the protector and intercessor of the city. The festivities began with vespers, where in the troparion of the feast the celebrants repeatedly declared Constantinople to be 'the city of the Theotokos'.[137] The next morning at matins, the patriarch led a large procession from the Great Church to the Forum and the first antiphon from Marian feasts was chanted: 'Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us!'[138] As these verses indicate, the Byzantine rite clearly

[135] *TAS*, p. 361.

[136] K. K. Aken'tev, 'Mozaiki Kievskoi sv. Sofii i "Slovo" Metropolita Ilariona v vizantiiskom liturgicheskom kontekste', *Vizantinorossika*, 1 (1995), pp. 75–94.

[137] *Le Typicon de la Grande Église*, ed. Juan Mateos (Rome, 1963), vol. I, p. 286.

[138] *Ibid.*, p. 287. On the history of antiphons in the eastern church, see E. I. Koliada, S. I. Nikitin, M. S. Zheltov, S. N. Lebedev, and N. I. Efimova, 'Antifon', in *PE* (Moscow, 2009), vol. II, pp. 554–60.

links the dedication of Constantine's Christian capital with the Mother of God and her intercessory prayers. Thus, when Prince Vladimir dedicated the Church of the Tithes to the Theotokos and asked for her intercessions, he may have been doing more than consecrating a single church. If it can be assumed that the chroniclers were somehow acquainted with the practices in the Imperial City, they may have been intimating that the Kievan prince dedicated his newly Christian capital to the Mother of God in the same manner that the patriarch of Constantinople rededicated the Byzantine capital to her every year on 11 May. Should this indeed be the case, then Vladimir is once again imitating the 'deeds of Constantine' in 996, just as he did earlier at the mass baptism in 988, by performing the liturgical roles prescribed for bishops in the church books of the Byzantine rite.

THE DEVIL AT BAPTISM

There is a second character in the story of the baptism of Rus whose representation derives from the sacraments and services of the Byzantine rite, and that character is the devil. As the citizens of Kiev are being baptised in the Dnieper, the devil 'groaned, lamenting':

оувы мнѣ ꙗко ѡсюда прогоним есмь. сде бо мнѧхъ жилище имѣти ꙗко сде не суть оученьꙗ апсльска. ни суть вѣдуще б҃а. но веселѧхъсѧ ѡ службѣ ихъ. еже служаху мнѣ. и се оуже побѣженъ ѥсмь ѿ невѣглас а не ѿ апслъ ни ѿ мч҃нкъ. не имам оуже црствовати въ странах сихъ.[139]

Woe is me, for I am banished from here. I thought I could find a home [in this land], for the apostles' teaching was not here, nor did they know God, but I rejoiced in the service of those who served me. And now I am conquered by the ignorant, and not by apostles or martyrs. I will no longer be able to reign in these lands.

Shakhmatov was the first to note the intimate connection between the devil's words in this passage and his statement in the Tale of the Varangian Martyrs.[140] In both places, the devil confessed that the teaching of the apostles had the power to expel him, even as he failed to recognize that Prince Vladimir also possessed this power as a 'new Constantine' and 'equal of the apostles'. The crucial difference between the two passages is that in the entry for 983 the prince's authority to drive out the devil is connected with the power of the 'true cross', while in 988 that authority is linked to the sacramental power of baptism and the rite of exorcism in particular.

[139] *PVL*, 118, 2–9. [140] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 471.

As Prince Vladimir and the priests of Cherson performed the baptism of Rus, the chroniclers creatively imagined the devil's perspective on the event, as it is depicted in the three exorcism prayers that precede the immersion ritual. These prayers address the devil as a personal being and command him to depart. The devil was banished from Rus, therefore, because the bishop prayed:

Запрещает тебе, диаволе, Господь пришедый в мир и вселивыйся в человецех, да разрушит твое мучительство, и человеки измет . . .[141]

The Lord bans you, O devil, He who came into the world, and dwelled among men, that He might demolish your tyranny and deliver men . . .

Further, the devil no longer had a 'home' in Rus because the prayers repeatedly portray him making a home in the body of unbaptised human beings, as in the second exorcism prayer:

Господи Саваоф, Боже Израилев, исцеляяй всякий недуг, и всякую язю, призри на раба твоего, взыщи, испытуй и отжени от него вся действа диаволя, запрети нечистым духом, и изжени я, и очисти дела руку твоею, и острое твое употребивый действо, сокруши сатану под нозе его вскоре, и даждь ему победы на него и на нечистыя его духи . . .[142]

Lord of Sabaoth, the God of Israel, who heals every malady and every infirmity. Look upon your servant. Save him, search and cast away from him every operation of the devil. Rebuke the unclean spirits and expel them and purify the works of your hands. And exerting your great power, speedily crush down Satan under his feet, and give him victory over him, and over his unclean spirits . . .

Moreover, the devil no longer enjoyed the 'service' of the citizens of Kiev because during the Renunciation of Satan service neophytes renounced the devil fifteen times with the words:

Отричуся сатаны и всех дел его и всея службы его и всех ангел его и всего студа его . . .[143]

I renounce satan and all his works, and all his service, and all his angels, and all his shame . . .

The liturgical subtext therefore indicates that the chronicler's depiction of the devil was perhaps intended as a form of satire. In both passages, the devil derided the Rus, even as he betrays his own miscomprehension. He mocked the ignorance of others and yet was unable to perceive the cause

[141] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', pp. 81–82. [142] *Ibid.* [143] *Ibid.*

of his own expulsion: that the teaching of the apostles was transmitted through the services of the Byzantine rite and that 'ignorant' Vladimir was performing these services as the first bishop of Kiev.

THE PANEGYRICS OF 988 AND 1015

The preceding analysis has shown that Prince Vladimir, the historiographical creation, baptised his subjects with the prayers of the baptismal rite and consecrated a church with the prayers of the rite of consecration for a church. These services continue to figure prominently in both the panegyric for the baptism of Rus that concludes the annals for 988, and in the panegyric for Vladimir upon his death in the year 1015. The earlier panegyric is a scriptural composite that contains approximately twenty phrases, and seventeen of these are citations from Holy Writ. Each citation is recited at some point in the Byzantine liturgical year, and approximately half of the phrases are connected to either the baptism and church consecration rites or the Feast of Theophany, the liturgical service that commemorates Christ's baptism in the Jordan River.

The composite begins with a paraphrase of a verse from the epistle reading at the ninth hour of Theophany.[144] The next line of the text, 'Blessed is the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved his new people and enlightened them with holy baptism', reproduces the first prayer at the Reception into the Catechumenate, 'Blessed is the Lord God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[145] It also repeats the 'new people' and 'enlightenment' motifs that occur in many of the baptism prayers already cited in this chapter. These motifs appear again in the middle of the passage and at the end of the account when the Kievans are called 'a new Christian people, chosen by God'.[146] The panegyric goes on to repeat the first line of an ancient baptism prayer: 'Great are you, O Lord, and wonderful are your works'/ '*велий еси Господи и чудна дела твоя*'. The bishop repeated this phrase three times at the blessing of waters on Theophany.[147] The panegyric also contains a verse from the epistle reading at baptism from the Book of Romans, a verse from the Gospel reading for the Forefeast of Theophany, and a lengthy citation from Psalm 145, the first psalm read during the solemn rite for blessing the altar table in the eleventh-century rubrics for the consecration of a church.[148] As we have already seen, these services were instrumental in the creation of the

[144] Titus 3:5. [145] Arranz, 'Chin oglasheniia i kreshcheniia v drevnei Rusi', p. 76.
[146] *PVL*, 121, 3–4.
[147] *TAS*, p. 316. On the historical development of this prayer, see Denysenko, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany*, p. 83.
[148] Romans 6:3. Luke 3:3. Zheltov, 'Chin osviashcheniia khrama', p. 115.

national conversion myth, and thus it comes as little surprise that they also shape the rhetorical panegyric with which the story concludes.

Themes from the Byzantine initation rites also appear in the encomium honouring Vladimir inserted in the entry for 1015:

се есть новыи костѧнтинъ великого рима. иже кртсивъсѧ сам и люди своꙗ. тако и сь створи подобно ѥму. ще бо бѣ и преже на скверньную похоть желаꙗ. но послѣ же прилежа к покаꙗнью. ꙗко же аплсъ вѣщаваеть. Идеже оумножитьсѧ грѣхъ. ту изобильствуеть блгдть. дивно же есть се колико добра створїлъ. русьстѣи земли кртсивъ ю. мы же хсьꙗне суще. не въздаем почестьꙗ противу ѡного възданью. аще бо ѡнъ не кртсилъ бы насъ. то нынѣ были быхомъ в прельсти дьꙗволи. ꙗкоже и прародители наши погынуаш. да аще быхом имѣли потщанье и мольбы приносили б҃у за нь в д҃нь преставленьꙗ ѥго. и видѧ бы б҃ъ тщанье наше к нему. прославилъ бы и. намъ бо достоить за нь б҃а молити. понеже тѣмь б҃а познахом. но дажь ти гсь по срдцю твоему. и всѧ прошеньꙗ твоꙗ исполни. ѥгоже желаше цртсва нбнсаго. дажь ти гсь вѣнець с праведными. в пищи раистѣи. веселье и ликъствованье съ аврамомь и с прочими патриархы. ꙗкоже соломонъ реч. оумершю мужю праведну. не погыбаеть оупованье. сего бо в памѧть держать русьстии людье. поминающе с҃тое крщ҃нье. и прославлѧють б҃а въ млт҃вахъ и в пѣснехъ. и въ псалмѣхъ поюще гвси. новии людье просвѣщени с҃тымь дх҃мь. чающе надежи великаго и сп҃са нашего ісс хса. въздати комуждо противу трудомъ. неиздреченьную радость.[149]

This is the new Constantine of mighty Rome, who was himself baptised and who baptised his people. For [Vladimir] imitated the deeds of [Constantine]. And even if he was formerly given to unclean lust, he later devoted himself to repentance. For as the apostle teaches, 'Where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.' It is truly wondrous what benefits [Vladimir] conferred upon the land of Rus by baptising it. Yet we Christians do not honour him in proportion to his deeds. For if he had not baptised us, even now we would remain under the diabolical delusions in which our forefathers perished. If we had been zealous and prayed for him on the day of his death, then God, seeing how we honour him, would have glorified him. And, in fact, we should pray to God for him, since through him we have known God. And may God give to you according to your heart, and fulfil all your requests, granting you the kingdom of heaven which you desired. May God crown you among the righteous and give you the sweetness of the food of paradise, and exultation with Abraham and the other patriarchs. For as Solomon said, 'When the righteous man dies, his hope perishes not.' The people of Rus therefore honour his memory, remembering their holy baptism, and glorify God in prayers and hymns and psalms, singing to God as His new people, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, maintaining the hope of

[149] *PVL*, 130, 30–131, 29.

our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who will give to each of us ineffable joy according to our deeds.

The chroniclers made their plea for Vladimir's canonization by appealing to the specifically sacramental role that the prince played in the conversion of Rus. Vladimir was a saint because 'he baptised his subjects'; because of 'the benefits [he] conferred upon the land of Rus' by baptising it'; because he was the sacramental minister 'through [whom, the Rus] have known God' and who liberated them, presumably with the exorcism prayers, from 'the diabolical delusions in which [their] forefathers perished'. Meanwhile, the chroniclers explained, Vladimir had yet to be glorified, not because of a deficit of saintliness on the prince's part but owing to the lack of zeal and piety exhibited by the faithful at the time of his death. The chroniclers then offered their own zealous prayer for Vladimir, 'And may God give to you according to your heart', comprising a verse from the second vesperal reading from the Feast of All Saints and other images from the hymnography of that service, such as the crown of righteousness and the communion of saints surrounding the patriarch Abraham.[150]

The panegyric concludes with an intriguing image of Vladimir being liturgically commemorated in Rus. The faithful 'honour his memory' and 'glorify God in prayers and hymns and psalms'. These two tropes were often used in Byzantine hymnography to refer to the commemoration of saints during liturgical worship. Take, for example, the following sticherion from the late twelfth-century Feast of All Saints:

Придѣте вьси вѣрьнии вьсѣхъ свѧтыихъ . вьсепраздьноую памѧть . въ псалмѣхъ и пѣниихъ . и пѣсньми доуховьныими въсхвалимъ . крьстителѧ съпасова . апостолы и пророкы и моученикы . свѧщеникы и оучителѧ и преподобьныѩ . постьникы и правьдьникы . и свѧтыихъ женъ боголюбьныи съставъ . . .[151]

O come all you faithful, let us praise in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs the all-celebrated memory of all the saints: the baptist of the Saviour, apostles and prophets and martyrs, priests and teachers and venerable ones, ascetics and righteous and the assembly of holy and god-loving women . . .

The chronicle account of Prince Vladimir's life ends with an image of his ritual commemoration. This is emblematic of the way that the services gradually drew newly converted cultures into the liturgical past. The rites of the church not only sent myths out into the world, they also received

[150] Alekseev, *Bibliia v bogosluzhenii*, p. 241. *Triod' tsvetnaia, notirovannaia*, GIM. Vosk., 200.1–207.1, ed. B. A. Baranovyi, www.manuscripts.ru/mns/main?p_text=38177049 (accessed June 2018).

[151] *Triod' tsvetnaia, notirovannaia*, GIM. Vosk., 202, 1–2.

new myths back into themselves. They were responsible not only for the making of historiographical figures, therefore, but also for the making of saints. This is a subject of immense importance, and I shall treat it at length in the concluding chapter. Before turning attention to that topic, however, I should like to investigate the liturgical origins of another foundational passage of early Rus historiography: the martyrdom of princes Boris and Gleb in the chronicle entry for 1015.

Chapter 6

A RATIONAL SACRIFICE: *The Martyrdom of Princes Boris and Gleb*

The tale of Boris and Gleb is intriguing because it is the first entry in the *Rus Primary Chronicle* that was possibly influenced by the liturgical services for native saints. The extant version of the tale was copied down in the early twelfth century, by which time the first office for the brothers had undoubtedly appeared in local church books.[1] Instructions for their feast day could be found, for instance, in the typicon entry for 24 July, and a substantial selection of hymnography, three times the size of a typical Stoudite office, was recorded in the Menaion.[2] The editors who compiled the extant story had therefore celebrated the Feast of Saints Boris and Gleb and knew its contents from first-hand experience. Thus, for the first time, we are confronted with a chronicle story about East Slav saints that may have drawn from the Slavonic services written specifically for those figures. On the other hand, it is also possible that these twelfth-century clerics merely copied and interpolated an older tale into the annals for 1015, one which had been composed prior to the brothers' glorification. In this case, we might suspect that a different set of liturgical texts, originating from Byzantium, had helped to shape the composition of the passage. But which was it? Had later generations drawn on the earliest services for Boris and Gleb in order to compose the extant chronicle tale? Or had this account already been written before these services existed, by clerics who drew on imported Byzantine feasts, rather than those native to the land of Rus? Such questions are unavoidable if one wishes to measure the impact of liturgy on the making of this classic historiographical text. Yet before considering them, I should first acquaint readers with the general contents of the chronicle tale itself.

1 V. B. Krys'ko, 'O grecheskikh istochnikakh i rekonstruktsii pervonachal'nogo teksta drevnerusskikh stikhir na Borisov den'', in F. B. Uspenskii (ed.), *Miscellanea Slavica: Sbornik statei k 70-letiiu Borisa Andreevicha* (Moscow, 2008), p. 95.

2 N. S. Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym: Po materialam rukopisnoi pevcheskoi knigi XI–XIV vv*. (St Petersburg, 1994), pp. 77–78.

THE ASSASSINATION OF BORIS AND GLEB

In addition to the passing of Prince Vladimir, the chronicle entry for the year 1015 recounted the double murder of his sons, Princes Boris and Gleb. The story opened in Berestovo, where Vladimir had unexpectedly died while planning for war against another son, Prince Iaroslav of Novgorod, who for two years had refused to pay his father tribute.

В лѣт.ѕ҃ф.к҃г. хотѧщю володимеру ити на ꙗрослава. ꙗрославъ же пославъ за море. приведе варѧгы боꙗсѧ ѡц҃а своѥго. но б҃ъ не вдасть дьꙗволу радости. володимеру бо разболѣвшюсѧ. в сеже времѧ бѧше оу него борисъ. печенѣгом идущемъ на русь. посла противу имъ бориса. самъ бо болѧше велми. в неиже болести и скончасѧ. мцса. иоулѧ. въ .е҃i. д҃нь.[3]

In the year 6523 (1015). Vladimir sought to attack Iaroslav. Iaroslav sent across the sea and brought over Varangians, since he feared his father. But God did not give the devil joy. At the time when Vladimir fell ill, Boris was with him. While the Pechenegs were attacking the Rus, he sent Boris out against them, for he himself was very sick, and on account of this illness he died in the month of July, on the fifteenth day.

With the throne in Kiev vacant, still another of Vladimir's sons, Prince Sviatopolk, moved to occupy it.

с҃тополкъ же сѣде кыевѣ по ѡ҃ци своемь. и съзва кыꙗны и нача даꙗти имъ имѣнь(е). ѡни же приимаху. и не бѣ срцде и(х)ъ с нимь. ꙗко братьꙗ ихъ бѣша с борисомь. и борису же възъвратившюсѧ съ вои. не ѡбрѣшю печенѣгъ. вѣсть приде к нему ѡц҃ь ти оумерелъ. и плакасѧ по ѡц҃и велми. любимъ бо бѣ ѡц҃емь воимь паче всѣхъ.[4]

Sviatopolk settled in Kiev after his father's [death]. And he assembled the Kievans and began to give out wealth. They accepted it, [but] their hearts were not with him, because their brothers were with Boris. When Boris returned with the army, not having found the Pechenegs, he received the news that his father had died. He wept greatly for his father. For he was beloved of his father more than all.

Boris and his soldiers were camped on the river Al'ta, not far from Kiev. Members of Vladimir's *druzhina* came to him there and urged him to seize the throne, since he was in command of the army and enjoyed support among the nobility.

ѡнъ же реч не буди мнѣ възнѧти рукы на брата своѥго старѣишаго. аще и ѡц҃ь ми оумре. то сь ми буди въ ѡц҃а мѣсто. и се слышавше вои разидошасѧ ѿ него. борисъ же стоꙗше съ ѡтрокы своими.[5]

[3] *PVL*, 130, 12–19. [4] *PVL*, 132, 2–9. [5] *Ibid.*, 12–16.

But Boris said, 'I shall not raise my hand against my elder brother. Now that my father has died, let him take the place of my father for me.' When the soldiers heard this, they departed from him, and Boris remained with his servants.

Sviatopolk was evidently aware of the threat posed by his younger brother, and he subsequently hatched a plan to have him eliminated. The elder prince went by night to Vyshgorod, where he met with the boyars of the town and arranged for them to assassinate Boris.

послании же придоша на льто ночью. и подъступиша ближе. и слышаша блж҃наго бориса поюща заоутреню. бѣ бо ему вѣсть оуже ꙗко хотѧть погубити и. и вставъ нача пѣти гл҃ѧ. Г(с)и что сѧ оумножиша стужающии мнѣ. мнози въстають на мѧ. и пакы ꙗко стрѣлы твоꙗ оуньзоша во мнѣ. ꙗко азъ на раны готовъ. и болѣзнь моꙗ предо мною есть. и пакы гл҃ше г(с)и оуслыши млт҃ву мою. и не вниди в судъ с рабомъ своимъ. ꙗко не ѡправдитсѧ предъ тобою всѧкъ живыи. ꙗко погна врагъ дш҃ю мою. и кончавъ ѡксапсалма. оувидѣвъ ꙗко послани суть губитъ ꙗего. нача пѣти псл҃тырю гл҃ѧ. ꙗко ѡбидоша мѧ оунци тучни. и сборъ злобивыхъ ѡсѣде мѧ. г(с)и б҃е мои на тѧ уповах и сп҃си мѧ. и ѿ всѣхъ гонѧщих избави мѧ. посемь же нача канунъ пѣти. таче кончавъ заоутреню. помолісѧ гл҃ѧ зрѧ на икону на ѡбразъ вл(д)чнь гл҃ѧ сице. г(с)и іс(с) хс(с) иже симь ѡбразомь ꙗвисѧ на земли. сп҃сньꙗ ради нашего. изволивъ своею волею пригвоздити на кр(с)тѣ руцѣ свои. и приимъ стр(с)ть грѣхъ ради наших. тако и мене сподоби приꙗти стр(с)ть. се же не ѿ противныхъ приимаю. но ѿ брата своего. и не створи ꙗему г(с)и в семь грѣха. и помолившюсѧ ему. възлеже на ѡдрѣ своем. и се нападоша акы звѣрье дивии ѡколо шатра. и насунуша и копьи.[6]

These emissaries came to the Al'ta, and when they drew nearer, they heard the blessed Boris singing matins. It was already known to him that they had come to kill him. And having arisen, he began to chant, saying, 'Oh Lord, how they are increased who come against me! Many are they who rise up against me.' And also, 'Your arrows have pierced me, for I am ready for wounds and my pain is before me continually.' And he also said, 'Lord, hear my prayer, and enter not into judgement with your servant, for no man living is righteous before you. For the enemy has hunted my soul.' And having finished the six psalms, he saw that men were sent to kill him, and he began to chant the psalter, saying, 'Strong bulls encompassed me, and the assembly of the evil have surrounded me. O Lord my God, I have hoped in you. Save me and deliver me from all that persecute me.' Then he began to sing the canon. After finishing matins, he prayed, gazing on an icon, on an image of the Lord, saying: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, who has appeared on earth in this image for the sake of our salvation; and who allowed, by your own will, to have your hands nailed to the cross; and who accepted the passion for the

[6] *PVL*, 133, 3–134, 3.

sake of our sins: so help me now to accept my passion. For I receive it not from my enemies, but from my own brother. And do not hold it against him as a sin, O Lord.' After offering this prayer, he lay down on his bed. And then they fell on him like wild beasts within the tent and pierced him with spears.

The initial assault failed to finish off the pious prince, however, and Sviatopolk was forced to dispatch a second set of assassins.

бориса же оубивше ѡканьнии оувертѣвше в шатеръ. възложивше на кола повезоша и. и еще дышющю ему. оувѣдѣвше же се ѡканьныи ст҃ополкъ ꙗко еще дышеть. посла два варѧга прикончатъ ѥго. ѡнѣма же пришедшема. ꙗко и еще живъ есть. единъ ею извлекъ мечь проньзе и къ ср(д)цю. и тако скончасѧ блж҃ныи борисъ. вѣнець приемъ ѿ х(с)а б҃а съ праведными. причетъсѧ съ прр҃кы и ап(с)лы. с ликы мч҃нчьскыми водварѧꙗсѧ. авраму на лонѣ почиваꙗ. видѧ неиздреченьную радость. въспѣваꙗ съ анг҃лы. и веселѧсѧ в лику ст҃ыхъ.[7]

The accursed ones, having slain Boris, wrapped him in a canvas, loaded him on a wagon, and dragged him off, even though he was still breathing. When the accursed Sviatopolk saw that he was still breathing, he sent two Varangians to finish him off. They arrived and saw that he was still alive. One of them drew a sword and thrust it into his heart. And thus died the blessed Boris, having received from Christ our God the crown with the righteous, being numbered with the prophets and apostles, joining the choirs of the martyrs, resting in the lap of Abraham, beholding unspeakable joy, singing with the angels, and rejoicing in the choir of the saints.

One rival was enjoying the delights of heaven, but several others still remained on earth. Sviatopolk therefore began to plot a number of additional murders, beginning with Prince Gleb in Murom. 'Adopting the thought of Cain' for a second time, the accursed one sought to deceive the younger prince by telling him that their father was ill and that he must return to Kiev.[8] Gleb received the message and set out for the capital at once, but he was intercepted en route by messangers from Iaroslav, who relayed the news of the family tragedy.

се слышавъ глѣбъ. възпи велми съ слезами плачасѧ по ѡц҃и. паче же по братѣ. и нача молитисѧ съ слезами гл҃ѧ. оувы мнѣ г(с)и. луче бы ми оумрети съ братомь. нежели жити на свѣтѣ семь. аще бо быхъ брате мои видѣлъ лице твое англ(с)кое. оумерлъ бых с тобою. нынѣ же что ради ѡстахъ азъ единъ. кдѣ суть словеса твоꙗ. ꙗже гл҃а къ мнѣ брате мои любимыи. нынѣ оуже не оуслышю тихаго твоего наказаньꙗ. да аще ѥси получилъ дерзновенье оу б҃а. молисѧ ѡ мнѣ да и азъ быхъ ту же стр(с)ть приꙗлъ. луче бо ми было с тобою жити. неже въ свѣтѣ семь прелестнѣмь..[9]

[7] *PVL*, 134, 14–26. [8] *PVL*, 135, 19. [9] *PVL*, 136, 1–27.

Having heard this, Gleb burst into tears, and wept greatly for his father, but still more deeply for his brother. He started to pray with tears, saying, 'Woe is me, O Lord. It would be better for me to die with my brother than to live on in this world. O my brother, had I only seen your angelic face, I would have died with you. For what reason am I now left alone? Where are your words that you used to say to me, my beloved brother? No longer do I hear your gentle instruction. If you have indeed received boldness before God, pray for me that I may receive the same passion. For it would be better for me to live with you, rather than in this deceitful world.

Gleb's prayer was speedily answered. At that very moment, as he prayed with tears, Sviatopolk's assassins arrived on the scene, seized the prince's boat, and drew their weapons.

ѡтроци глѣбови оуныша. ѡканьныи же посланыи горѧсѣръ. повелѣ вборзѣ зарѣзати глѣба. поваръ же глѣбовъ именемь торчинъ. вынезъ ножь зарѣза глѣба. акы агнѧ непорочно. принесесѧ на жертву б҃ви в воню бл҃гооуханью. жертва словеснаꙗ. и приꙗ вѣнець вшедъ въ нб(с)ныꙗ ѡбители. и оузрѣ желаемаго брата своего. И радовашесѧ с нимь неиздреченьною радостью. юже оулучиста братолюбьемь своимь

The servants of Gleb were saddened. The accursed messenger Goriaser ordered that they should slay Gleb quickly. Then Gleb's cook named Torchin took up a knife and stabbed Gleb, like a spotless lamb, offered to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, a rational sacrifice. And receiving the crown, Gleb entered into the heavenly abodes, and beheld his desired brother, and rejoiced with him in ineffable joy, which they had attained through their brotherly love.

The murder of Prince Gleb was followed by a lengthy encomium to the saintly brothers. It began with the following verses:

и съвкуплена тѣломь. паче же дш҃ама оу въладыкы всецрѧ(с). пребывающа в радости бесконечнѣи. во свѣтѣ неиздреченьнѣмь. подающа ицѣлебныꙗ дары русьстѣи земли. и инѣмъ приходѧщим странным с вѣрою даета ицѣленье. хромым ходити. слѣпымъ прозрѣнье. болѧщим цѣлбы. ѡкованым разрѣшенье. темницам ѿверзенье. печалным оутѣха. напастным избавленье. и еста заступника русьстѣи земли. и свѣтилника сиꙗюща и молѧщасѧ воину къ вл(д)цѣ. ѡ своихъ людех. тѣм же и мы должни есмы хвалити достоино стр(с)пца хв(с)а . . .[10]

United in body and still more in soul, you dwell with the Lord and King of all in unending joy and ineffable light, bestowing the gifts of healing on the land of Rus. You give healing to [pilgrims] from other lands who draw near with faith, making the lame to walk, giving sight to the blind, health to the sick, freedom to

[10] *PVL*, 137, 11–22.

captives, liberty to prisoners, consolation to the sorrowful, and relief to the oppressed. You are the intercessors of the land of Rus, shining like lamps and praying truly to the Lord for your people. Wherefore, we should worthily magnify the passion-bearers of Christ . . .

The chronicle passage for the year 1015 then proceeded to describe the opening salvos of the war of succession waged between Sviatopolk and Iaroslav. This was a protracted contest, spanning some four years, and it was the Novgorodian prince who eventually prevailed in 1019. The chronicler made little effort to disguise his delight at Sviatopolk's defeat and gruesome end. A demon was said to have entered the fratricide and he lost his mind, dying a miserable death in the hinterlands between Poland and Bohemia. 'His grave remains in the wilderness even to this day,' the chronicler reported, 'and an evil odour pours forth from it. This was done by God as a warning to the princes of Rus. For should they commit the same crime, even after hearing of this dread example, then they shall likewise receive the same punishment, but even more severe.'[11]

The chronicle reported nothing more about the blessed brothers for nearly sixty years. Then, in the entry for 1072, there appeared a detailed description of the translation of their relics into a new church built by their nephew, Prince Iziaslav, the son and heir of Iaroslav. This solemn event was attended by many of the leading dignitaries of the land, including Iziaslav's brothers, Princes Sviatoslav and Vsevolod, as well as Metropolitan George of Kiev and several other high-ranking bishops and abbots.

В лѣт ѕ҃.ф.п҃. Пронесошасѧ ст҃аꙗ ст(с)рпцѧ. бориса и глѣба . . . и створше праздникъ праздноваша свѣтло. преложиша ꙗ в новую црк҃вь. юже сдѣла изѧславъ. ꙗже стоить и нынѣ. и веземше первое бориса. в древѧнѣ рацѣ. изѧславъ ст҃ославъ. всеволодъ. веземше на рама своꙗ понесоша. предъидущем черноризцем свѣщѣ держаще в рукахъ. и по них дьꙗкони с кадилы и по семь презвитери. и по них еп(с)пи с митрополитом. по сих с ракою идѧху. и принесше в новую црк҃вь ѿверзоша раку исполнисѧ бл҃гоуханьꙗ цр҃кы вонѣ бл҃гы. видѣвше же се прославиша б҃а. и митрополита оужасть ѡбиде. бѣ бо нетвердъ вѣрою к нима и падъ ниць просѧше прощеньꙗ. цѣловавше мощи его вложиша и в раку камену. по сем же веземше глѣба в рацѣ каменѣ. вставиша на сани. и емше за оужа везоша. и ꙗко быша въ дверех ста рака и не иде. и повелѣша народу възвати г(с)и помилуи. и повезоша и и положиша ꙗ м(с)ца. маꙗ .в҃. дн҃ь. и ѿпѣвше литургию. ѡбѣдаша братьꙗ на скупь кождо с боꙗры своими. с любовью великою.[12]

[11] *PVL*, 145, 20–24. [12] *PVL*, 181, 26–182, 17.

In the year 6580 (1072). The translation of the holy passion-bearers Boris and Gleb . . . They instituted a festival and celebrated it brightly. And they laid them in a new church built by Iziaslav, which still stands even now. First, Iziaslav, Sviatoslav, and Vsevolod took [the relics of] Boris in a wooden casket and carried it on their shoulders, while monks went before them holding candles in their hands. After them came deacons with censers, and then priests, and after them came the bishops with the metropolitan, and finally the bearers of the casket. They carried it into the new church, and when they opened the casket, the church was filled with a sweet-smelling fragrance. Having seen this, they glorified God. And fear overcame the metropolitan, for he had been unsteady in his faith towards them, and he prostrated himself, asking for forgiveness. After kissing the relics [of Boris], they placed them in a stone coffin. Then they placed [the relics of] Gleb in a stone coffin and laid it on a sled, which they pulled along by means of ropes. And when they were at the doors, the coffin stopped, and would not move further. Then they ordered the people to cry out, 'Lord, have mercy' and [the coffin] passed through. Thus, [the relics] were deposited on the second day of May. And once the liturgy had been sung, the brethren dined together, along with their boyars, and with great love.

ROYAL MARTYRDOM IN RUS

The chronicle account is only one of several texts about Boris and Gleb that survive from the pre-Mongol period. Among the other writings, one finds liturgical offices, thematic sermons, a variety of short and long biographies, and a unique set of readings from the Prophetologion (*Parimii* or *Parimeinik*), the church book usually containing pericopes from the Old Testament.[13] This cycle of eleventh- and twelfth-century texts has been the subject of extensive study, dating back to the final decade of the nineteenth century.[14] After nearly 150 years of debate, however, there is little consensus about many of the most elementary claims involving the princes. Scholars disagree about the historical sequence of events underlying the narratives, the relative age and

[13] On the history of the publication of these texts, and a comparison of recent critical editions to previous versions, see Natalia Pak, 'O novom izdanii pamiatnikov Boriso-Glebskogo tsikla sravnitel'no s predydushchimi', *Ruthenica*, 6 (2007), pp. 397–441.

[14] A. I. Sobolevskii, '"Pamiat' i pokhvala sv. Vladimiru" i "Skazanie" o svv. Borise i Glebe', *Xhristianskoe chtenie*, 5–6 (1890), pp. 791–804. A. I. Sobolevskii., 'Materialy i zametki po drevnerusskoi literature: Kogda napisano Nesterovo "Chtenie o svv. Borise i Glebe"?', *IORIaS*, 21 (1916), pp. 206–208. V. Vasil'ev, 'Istoriia kanonizatsii rus. sviatykh', *ChOIDR,* 3 (1893), pp. 63–67. S. P. Pisarev, 'Bylo li perenesenie moshchei sv. muchenikov Borisa i Gleba iz Vyshgoroda v Smolensk na Smiadyn'?' *Smolenskie EV*, 8–12 (1897). G. K. Bugoslavskii, 'Ivanicheskie mesiachnye Minei 1547–1549 gg. i soderzhashaiasia v nikh sluzhba sv. kniaz'iam-muchenikam Borisu i Glebu', *ChIONL*, 14 (1900), pp. 29–70. P. V. Golubovskii, 'Sluzhba sviatym muchenikam Borisu i Glebu v Ivanicheskoi Minee 1547–1549 gg.', *ChIONL*, 3 (1900), pp. 125–64.

provenance of the extant manuscripts, and the origins and nature of the early cult.[15] A particularly vast literature concerns the relationship between the chronicle account and two early hagiographies: the anonymous *Narration and Passion and Eulogy to the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb* and the *Lection on the Life and Death of the Blessed Passion-Bearers Boris and Gleb*, attributed to the monk Nestor of the Monastery of the Caves.[16] Opinions about the interrelations between these texts vary widely, but philologists generally agree that the *Narration* preceded the *Lection* and that both texts drew on still earlier chronicle records.[17]

The question of earlier literary and hagiographical models is also disputed. What inspired the clerics of early Rus to conceive of two brothers, murdered during a succession crisis, as saints of the Christian church? What were the archetypes, if any, that they had in mind when they reinterpreted these political assassinations as a form of martyrdom? One school of thought, originating from the émigré religious philosopher Georgii Fedotov, maintains that there were no exact foreign models for Boris and Gleb, since they were the first representatives of a special class of 'passion-bearing' saints (*strastoterptsy*). The brothers had attained sainthood by voluntarily submitting to a violent and unjust death, Fedotov claimed, and this Christ-like sacrifice therefore marked the beginning of

[15] For an overview of these debates, see Marina Paramonova, 'The Formation of Boris and Gleb and the Problem of External Influences', in H. Antonsson and I. H. Garipzanov (eds.), *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern* Europe *(c. 1000–1200)*, pp. 259–82; S. M. Mikheev, *'Sviatopolk sede v Kieve po ottsi': Usobitsa 1015–1019 godov v drevnerusskikh i skandinavskikh istochnikakh* (Moscow, 2009), pp. 10–18; C. Zuckerman, 'Nabliudeniia nad slozheniem drevneishikh istochnikov letopisi', in C. Zuckerman (ed.), *Boriso-Glebskii sbornik, Collectanea Borisoglebica* (Paris, 2009), vol. I, pp. 183–99.

[16] 'Skazanie, strast' i pokhvala sviatykh" muchenik" Borisa i Gleba, kniazei russkikh' and 'Chtenie o zhitii i o pogublenii blazhennuiu strastoterptsa Borisa i Gleba', in D. I. Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG* (Petrograd, 1916), pp. I-XII, 1–10, 179–89. See also N. N. Nikol'skii, *Materialy dlia povremennogo spiska russkikh pisatelei i ikh sochinenii (X–XI vv.)* (St Petersburg, 1906), pp. 46–58, 253–89, 395–402. A. A. Shakhmatov, *RDRLS* (St Petersburg, 1908), pp. 29–97. A. A. Shakhmatov, *Povest' vremennykh let* (Prague, 1916), vol. I, pp. LXVII–LXXVII. S. A. Bugoslavskii, 'K voprosu o kharaktere i ob"eme literaturnoi deiatel'nosti prp. Nestora', *IORIaS*, 19 (1914), pp. 131–86. S. A. Bugoslavskii, *Tekstologiia Drevnei Rusi,* vol. II: *Drevnerusskie literaturnye proizvedeniia o Borise i Glebe*, ed. Iu. A. Artamonov (Moscow, 2007). N. I. Serebrianskii, *Drevne-russkiia kniazheskiia zhitiia: Obzor redaktsii i teksty* (Moscow, 1916), pp. 81–107.

[17] L. Müller, 'Studien zur altrussishcen Legende der hl. Boris und Gleb', *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 23, 25 (1954), pp. 60–77, 329–63. L. Müller, 'O vremeni kanonizatsii sv. Borisa i Gleba', *Russia Mediaevalis*, 8 (1995), pp. 5–20. L. Müller, 'Letopisnyi rasskaz i Skazanie o sv. Borise i Glebe: Ikh tektsual'noe vzaimnootnoshenie', *Russia, Medaevalis* 10 (2002), pp. 22–33. G. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Sociocultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (Columbus, 1989), pp. 79, 88, 104. N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatye kniaz'ia-mucheniki Boris i Gleb* (St Petersburg, 2006), pp. 134–54. On the possibility that the *Narration* was the source of the chronicle tale, see N. N. Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia 6523 goda i ego istochniki* (Moscow, 1957) and Andrzej Poppe, 'O zarozhdenii kul'ta sviatykh Borisa i Gleba i o posviashchennykh im proizvedeniiakh', *Russia Mediaevalis*, 8, pp. 21–68. On the primacy of the *Lection* before the *Narration*, see N. N. Voronin, 'Anonimoe skazanie o Borise i Glebe, ego vremia, stil' i avtor', *TODRL*, 13 (1957), pp. 11–56.

a new and uniquely Russian form of sanctity.[18] Dietrich Freydank and Franklin Sciacca, among others, have countered Fedotov's hypothesis by pointing to pan-European examples of royal martyrdom in places as far-ranging as Anglo-Saxon England, France, Bulgaria, and Scandinavia.[19] The most widespread claim, however, concerns the cult of Saint Wenceslas, a tenth-century Bohemian duke murdered on the orders of his younger brother Boleslav in the year 935.[20] For most of the twentieth century, scholars generally agreed with Roman Jakobson and Norman Ingham that this Bohemian saint was the main inspiration for the veneration of Boris and Gleb. Here was another Slavic prince, a righteous victim and ideal ruler, who had suffered and died in the manner of Christ and the martyrs. Was not his cult, and its associated texts, therefore the prototype for the cult of the saintly brothers in Kiev? The answer, as Lenhoff and Marina Paramonova have persuasively shown, is probably not. Eleventh-century Kievans may have been aware of the parallel, but the extant Slavonic texts betray no evidence of direct Czech influence. Wenceslas is explicitly mentioned in one later *vita* of Boris and Gleb, as an example of a martyr killed by a relative, but the replication of precise details, let alone word-for-word textual borrowings, from the Bohemian lives or liturgical services are otherwise entirely absent.[21]

[18] G. Fedotov, *Sviatye drevnei Rusi (X–XVII st.)* (Paris, 1931). G. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind* (Cambridge, 1946). See also V. N. Toporov, 'Ideia sviatosti v drevnei Rusi: Vol'naia zhertva kak podrazhanie Khristu (Skazanie o Borise i Glebe)', *Russian Literature* 25, 1 (1989), pp. 1–102. On the seminal importance of Boris and Gleb for Russian sainthood, see B. A. Uspenskii, *Boris i Gleb: Vospriiatie istorii v Drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 2000).

[19] D. Freydank, 'Die altrussische Hagiographie in ihren europäischen Zusammenhängen: Die Berichte über Boris und Gleb als hagiographische Texte', *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 28, 1, (1983), pp. 78–85. F. Sciacca, 'The Kievan Cult of Boris and Gleb: The Bulgarian Connection', in R. Lencek (ed.), *Proceedings of the Symposium on Slavic Cultures: Bulgarian Contribution to Slavic Culture* (Sofia, 1983), pp. 61–67. G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 131–33. M. Osterrieder, 'Das Land der Heiligen Sophia: Das Auftauchen des Sophia-Motifs in der Kultur der Ostslaven', *Wiener Slawistischen Almanach*, 50 (2002), pp. 42–43. H. Antonsson, 'The Cult of St Olaf in the Eleventh Century and Kievan Rus'', *Middelalderforum*, 1–2 (2003), pp. 143–60.

[20] R. O. Jakobson, 'Some Russian Echoes of Czech Hagiography', *Annuaire de l'Institut de philology et d'histoire orientales et slaves*, 8 (1944), pp. 155–80. N. W. Ingham, 'Czech Hagiography in Kiev: The Prisoner Miracles of Boris and Gleb', *Die Welt der Slaven*, 10 (1965), pp. 166–82. N. W. Ingham, 'The Sovereign as Martyr, East and West', *SEEJ*, 17 (1973), pp. 1–17. N. W. Ingham, 'The Martyred Prince and the Question of Slavic Cultural Continuity', in H. Birnbaum and M. S. Flier (eds.), *Medieval Russian Culture* (Los Angeles, 1984), pp. 31–53. A. I. Rogov, *Skazaniia o nachale cheshskogo gosudarstva v drevnerusskoi pis'mennosti* (Moscow, 1970). B. A. Floria, 'Václavska legenda a borisovsko-glebovsky kult (shody a rozdíly)', *Cheskoslovensky chasopis historicky*, 26, 1 (1978), pp. 82–95. Freydank, 'Die altrussische Hagiographie in ihren europäischen Zusammenhängen', pp. 78–80.

[21] Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, pp. 81–82. Paramonova, 'The Formation of Boris and Gleb and the Problem of External Influences', pp. 274–82.

There is some mention of Byzantine liturgy in the scholarship. The pioneer in this respect was Gail Lenhoff, who in her monograph from 1987 became the first to draw on liturgical texts in order to reconstruct the history of the cult's formation.[22] Nadezhda Seregina continued this practice in her study of the hymnography chanted on the brothers' feast day, and Aleksandr Uzhankov also examined liturgical texts in order to date the canonization.[23] Other scholars have looked to earlier Byzantine feasts to help contextualize the veneration of the princes. Milos Velimirovic, Felix Keller, and Vadim Kry'sko have documented the Greek-language origins of the hymnography for Boris and Gleb, and Monica White has written extensively on the influence of Byzantine military saints on the cult.[24] Some claims are considerably more speculative. S. A. Ivanov has argued, without any textual evidence, that the martyrdom is patterned after the unofficial cult of Nikephoras II Phokas, a Byzantine emperor assassinated by his relative and friend.[25] More recently, S. Iu. Temchin has proposed that the murders are modelled on a sermon by Saint John Chrysostom devoted to the Bethlehem infants, though Andrei Ranchin has dismissed such parallels as 'commonplaces' in the church literature, lacking any direct relation to Boris and Gleb.[26]

Another point of contention, which has attracted an increasing amount of attention since the 1960s, involves the canonization of the princes. The political nature of the fratricide, coupled with the subsequent championing of its victims by the dynasty, has led most scholars to conclude that the cult was initiated from above, in an effort to unite the population beneath the banner of a divinely blessed ruler.[27] Not all scholars subscribe to this

[22] Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, pp. 55–77.

[23] Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym*, pp. 75–101. A. N. Uzhankov, 'Sviatye strastoterptsy Boris i Gleb: K istorii kanonizatsii i napisaniia zhitii', *DR*, 2 (2000), pp. 37–49.

[24] M. Velimirovic, 'The Influence of the Byzantine Chant on the Music of the Slavic Countries', in J. M. Hussey, D. Obolensky, and S. Runciman (eds.), *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London, 1967), pp. 119–47. F. Keller, 'Das Kontakion aus der ersten Služba für Boris und Gleb', in Peter Brang, Harald Jaksche and Hildegard Schroeder (eds.), *Schweizerische Beiträge zum VII. Internationalen Slavistenkongreß in Warschau, August 1973* (Lucerne, 1973), pp. 65–73. Krys'ko, 'O grecheskikh istochnikakh', pp. 92–109. M. White, *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2013).

[25] S. A. Ivanov, 'Neskol'ko zamechanii o vizantiiskom kontekste borisoglebsogo kul'ta', in C. Zuckerman (ed.), *Boriso-Glebskii sbornik, Collectanea Borisoglebica* (Paris, 2009), vol. I, pp. 353–64.

[26] S. Iu. Temchin, '"Se nest' ubiistvo, no syrorezanie": Agiograficheskii obraz vifleemskikh mladentsev kak kontseptual'naia osnova Borisoglebskogo kul'ta', in F. B. Uspenskii (ed.), *Imenoslov. Istoriia iazyka. Istoriia kul'tury* (Moscow, 2012), pp. 216–30. A. M. Ranchin, 'Pochitanie sviatykh Borisa i Gleba: k voprosu ob obraztsakh', in *Tezisy dokladov uchastnikov VII mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii "Kompleksnyi podkhod v izuchenii drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 2013), pp. 113–14.

[27] M. Dimnik, 'Oleg Sviatoslavich and his Patronage of the Cult of SS Boris and Gleb', *Medieval Studies*, 50 (1988), pp. 349–70. P. A. Hollingsworth, 'Holy Men and the Transformation of Political Space in Medieval Rus', in J. H. Howard-Johnston and P. A. Hayward (eds.), *The*

view, however. Edward Reisman associates the cult with earlier Varangian practices and the worship of a 'priest-king'.[28] Michael Cherniavsky and Franklin Sciacca see the origins of the cult in indigenous pagan traditions, while others, such as Vasilii Komarovich and Lenhoff, suggest that it developed syncretically, when pre-conversion notions of ancestor worship merged with popular forms of Christian piety.[29]

The chronology of the cult's formation is still another source of controversy. Broadly speaking, the debate pits those who favour an early glorification of the brothers under Prince Iaroslav against those who support a later dating, during the reign of one of his sons or grandsons. Golubinskii, for instance, suggested a date as early as 1020, while Shakhmatov and Priselkov made the rather more precise conjecture of 24 July, in either 1020 or 1026, the years on which this feast day fell on a Sunday.[30] Lenhoff and Sophia Senyk placed the canonization in the reign of Prince Iaroslav and Metropolitan John I, that is, in the third and fourth decades of the eleventh century, although they do not specify an exact date.[31] Dmitrii Abramovich set the *terminus ad quem* of the cult's recognition at 1035, the end of Metropolitan John I's prelacy, since he is often identified as the author of the first liturgical office.[32] Likhachev formulated the hypothesis that the brothers were canonized around 1037, in connection with the founding of a metropolitan see in Kiev, while Ludolf Müller placed the official veneration in 1039.[33] Miliutenko, meanwhile, dated the opening stage of canonization to 1051, at which

Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown (Oxford, 1999), pp. 187–214.

28 E. S. Reisman, 'The Cult of Boris and Gleb: Remnant of a Varangian Tradition?', *RR*, 2 (1978), pp. 141–57.

29 M. Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven, 1961), p. 9. F. Sciacca, 'Royal Farmers: A Folkloric Investigation into Pagan Origins of the Cult of Boris and Gleb', *Ulbandus Review* 1 (1977), pp. 3–14. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, pp. 32–54. V. L. Komarovich, 'Kul't roda i zemli v kniazheskoi srede XI–XIII vv.', in A. F. Litvina and F. B. Uspenskii (eds.), *Iz istorii russkoi kultury* (Moscow, 2002), vol. II, pp. 8–29. For criticism of this approach, see A. Poppe, 'Sv. Gleb na bereze: Zametka o remesle issledovatelia' *Ruthenica*, 6 (2007), pp. 308–12.

30 Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 58. M. D. Priselkov, *Ocherki po tserkovno-politicheskoi istorii Kievskoi Rusi* (St Petersburg, 1913), p. 71.

31 Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, pp. 46–54. S. Senyk, *A History of the Church of Ukraine*, vol. I: *To the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Rome, 1993), pp. 227, 401–402.

32 Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG*, p. XX.

33 Likhachev, 'Povest vremennykh let (Istoriko-literaturnyi ocherk)', in *Povest' vremennykh let,* p. 65. L. Müller, 'Neuere Forschungen über das Leben und die kultishce Verehrung der Heiligen Boris und Gleb', *Opera Slavica* 4 (1963), p. 314. L. Müller, 'Zür Frage nach dem Zeitpunkt der Kanonisierung der Heiligen Boris und Gleb', in A. N. Tachiaos (ed.), *The Legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius to Kiev and Moscow* (Thessaloniki, 1992), pp. 312–39. Müller, 'O vremeni kanonizatsii sviatykh Borisa i Gleba', pp. 5–20.

time she believed that Iaroslav built the first church in honour of his half-brothers and had their relics transferred there.[34]

Other scholars have rejected the idea that Boris and Gleb were recognized as saints by the end of Iaroslav's reign. These researchers, such as Mikhail Karger, N. N. Il'in, Mark Aleshkovskii, and Poppe, contended that the brothers were canonized in 1072, on the occasion of the translation of their relics by Iaroslav's three sons.[35] They therefore attributed the composition of the first liturgical services not to Metropolitan John I, but rather to a later successor of the same name, John II Prodromos, who presided in Kiev from 1076 to 1089. Uzhankov conjectured that it was during this prelate's tenure, sometime in the late 1080s, that the brothers' status as saints was recognized throughout the eastern church, in Constantinople as well as Kiev.[36] A much later date was preferred by Miliutenko, however, who speculated that the 'official national canonization' of Boris and Gleb did not take place until 1115, during the reign of Prince Vladimir Monomakh.[37] One of the reasons that these dates can vary so widely is that very little is known about the medieval eastern church's procedures for the glorification of new saints. This is a problem that I shall discuss at length in the next chapter, when I conclude the book with a new theory about canonization in early Rus. Before turning attention to that subject, however, I should like to continue my investigation into the liturgical sources of Kievan historiography and return to the question that I posed at the outset of this chapter. Did the chroniclers draw on the first services for Boris and Gleb in order to write the extant chronicle tale? Or had this story already been composed before any such services were celebrated in the land of Rus?

METROPOLITAN JOHN'S OFFICE AND THE CHRONICLE ACCOUNT

The earliest hymns for Boris and Gleb predate the services for all other Kievan saints by over a hundred years. They survive in eighteen

[34] Miliutenko, *Sviatye kniaz'ia-mucheniki Boris i Gleb*, p. 45.

[35] M. K. Karger, 'K istorii kievskogo zodchestva XI v. Khram-mavzolei Borisa i Gleba v Vyshgorode', *Sovetskaia arkheologiia*, 16 (1952), p. 65. Il'in, *Letopisnaia stat'ia 6523 goda*, pp. 180–82. M. Kh. Aleshkovskii, *Povest' vremennykh let: Sud'ba literaturnogo proizvodeniia v drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 83–92. A. Poppe, 'O vremeni zarozhdeniia kul'ta Borisa i Gleba', *Russia Mediaevalis*, 1 (1973) pp. 6–29. Poppe, 'O zarozhdenii kul'ta sviatykh Borisa i Gleba', pp. 21–68. A. Poppe, 'La naissance du culte de Boris et Gleb', *Cahiers de civilization médiévale*, 24 (1981), pp. 29–53. A. Poppe, 'Losers on Earth, Winners in Heaven: The Assassinations of Boris and Gleb in the Making of Eleventh-Century Rus'', in *Christian Russia in the Making* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 133–68.

[36] Uzhankov, 'Sviatye strastoterptsy Boris i Gleb', pp. 35–50.

[37] Miliutenko, *Sviatye kniaz'ia-mucheniki Boris i Gleb*, pp. 50–55.

manuscripts, dating from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, and specialists distinguish between two redactions.[38] The first, as noted above, is traditionally attributed to one of the eleventh-century metropolitans of Kiev with the name of John, while the second is credited to Arkadii, the bishop of Novgorod from 1156 to 1163. These two versions of the office are separated in time by roughly a century, depending on how scholars date them, and they therefore exhibit some rather pronounced differences. Perhaps the most striking feature of the metropolitan's office is how little it seems to have in common with the chronicle passage. The service portrays the brothers primarily as healers and intercessors, while the chronicle mostly focuses on their passion and personal sacrifice. The vast majority of the hymns are ahistorical and highly generalized, lacking any relation to the princes' earthly biography. The opening sedalen, chanted in the first tone, is representative:

Измлада Христа възлюбивъши купьно, брата честнаа, и жизнь не старосьную възлюбивъши, славьная, цѣломудрие изволиста и пощение отъ страсти душегубьныихъ: тѣм, съ поспѣшениемь Божию благодать приимъша, ицѣляета болящая.[39]

Having come to love Christ together at an early age, O honourable brothers, and having come to love a life free from passions, O glorious ones, you chose chastity and abstinence from passions that harm the soul. Wherefore, having been granted divine grace through good works, you heal the sick.

The kontakion comes next and provides worshippers with the princes' baptismal names, Romanus and David, but it again comprises mostly liturgical clichés.

Въсия днесь преславьная память ваю, мученика Христова Романе и Давыде, съзывающи нась къ похвалениюи Христа, Бога нашего. Тѣм и притѣкающе къ рацѣ ваю, исцѣления дары приемлемъ: вы – божествьная врача еста![40]

Today your most glorious memory shines forth, O martyrs in Christ Romanus and David, summoning us to praise Christ our God. Therefore, hastening to your coffins, we receive the gifts of healing – [for] you are divine physicians!

The third song in the manuscript, the oikos, supplies only slightly more biographical information.

[38] For a detailed overview of these early redactions, as well as those of the Muscovite period, see Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, pp. 56–71.
[39] The citation reproduces the modernized punctuation and orthography of Abramovich's critical edition. See Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG*, p. 136.
[40] *Ibid.*

Разумьное житие съвьршая, преблажене, цесарьскыимь вѣньцемь отъ уности украшенъ, пребогатыи Романе: власть велия бысть своему отечьству и веси твари. Тѣмь, видя твои успѣхъ, Христосъ Богъ судомь Своимь на мучение призъва тя и крѣпость ти подавъ съ небесе, да побѣдиши врага съ Давыдомь мужьскы, съ братомь си, пострадавъшимь и живъшим съ тобою.[41]

Completing an enlightened life, O most blessed one, you were adorned with an imperial crown from youth, O most wealthy Romanus: you had great power over your homeland and all Creation. Wherefore, seeing your success, Christ God in his judgement summoned you to martyrdom and gave you strength from heaven, [in order] to vanquish the enemy courageously together with David, your brother, who suffered and lived with you.

The reason these hymns seem generic and abstract is because they were originally composed for other Byzantine saints. Indeed, scholars have discovered a number of places in Metropolitan John's office, including the three listed above, where Kievan scribes borrowed nearly word for word from earlier Greek-language liturgical texts. Felix Keller has shown, for instance, that the kontakion for Boris and Gleb is practically identical to a sticheron praising Saint Procopius, a martyr who perished during the Diocletian persecutions. The oikos for the two brothers, he also notes, is a 'reworked translation' of an oikos from the services for Saints Cyrus and John, a pair of wonder-working fourth-century martyrs and 'unmercenary physicians', a special class of Byzantine saints celebrated for treating the sick free of charge.[42] Milos Velimirovic and Vadim Kry'sko, meanwhile, have observed that a significant portion of the sticheron at the aposticha is a literal translation of a Greek sticheron from the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Velimirovic also points to another place where this occurs in the Kievan hymnography, in a sticheron performed just prior to the canon at matins. In this instance, the translators appear to have transformed the contents of a Greek hymn, chanted at the services for both Saint George and Saint Demetrios, into a Slavonic hymn glorifying the exploits of Boris and Gleb.[43] The first hymnodists in Rus appear to have chosen these liturgical models with great care, since they knew that it would do much to determine the nature of the brothers' veneration. By using the hymns for martyrs, such as Procopius and George, the feast day for Boris and Gleb was instantly associated with the class of feasts for other martyred saints. By using the hymns for unmercenary physicians, such as

[41] *Ibid*., pp. 137–38.
[42] Keller, 'Das Kontakion aus der ersten Služba für Boris und Gleb', pp. 67–71.
[43] Velimirovic, 'The Influence of the Byzantine Chant on the Music of the Slavic Countries', pp. 131–32. Krys'ko, 'O grecheskikh istochnikakh', pp. 98–99.

John and Cyrus, the brothers were likewise associated with another clearly defined class of Byzantine saints: those who were venerated in tandem and who performed miracles of healing.[44] 'These models,' writes Lenhoff, 'provided the hymnographer with a series of general patterns comparable to the sketches in a composite picture book. The composer matched the life and deeds of the saints in question to increasingly specialized hagiographical categories and prototypes.'[45]

The scribes in Kiev may have used these specific Byzantine saints as prototypes, but they never mentioned them by name in any of the hymns of the new service. Rather, the lone typological predecessor that they explicitly identified was Saint Stephen the Protomartyr, the apostle murdered by a hostile crowd during an assembly of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. His name appears twice in Metropolitan John's office, first in a sticheron chanted at vespers and then again in the sixth ode of the canon.

Дѣлы и учении Христовы исполняюща заповѣди и Того повелѣния, врагом не вражьдоваста, на убиение пришьдъшихъ ваю неправьдьно. Но, яко Стефану подобника пьровмученику, молястася: «не постави имъ грѣха, глаголюща, человѣколюбьче, Боже нашь, Iсусе и Спасе душамъ нашимъ».[46]

Fulfilling the commandments of Christ and His instructions in [your] actions and teachings, you did not rage against the enemy who came to kill you unjustly. But like Stephen the protomartyr, you prayed, saying: 'Do not hold this against them as a sin, O lover of mankind, our God, Jesus, the Saviour of our souls.'

Яко въ истину сыи подобникъ Бога въплъщьшагося, за убивающа тя теплѣ моляше тя, святе, яко въторый первомученикъ Стефанъ великый: сего ради с нимь прославися.[47]

You were truly an emulator of God Incarnate, O holy one, praying fervently for those who murdered you, like a second protomartyr Stephen the great. Therefore, with him you have been glorified.

The direct comparisons to Saint Stephen are curious, since they coincide with a typological association that is hinted at in the chronicle passage, albeit only indirectly. In the final line of his last prayer, Boris asks God to make him worthy to imitate Christ's passion and then concludes with the words:

се же не ѿ противныхъ приимаю. но ѿ брата своего. и не створи ѥму г(с)и в семь грѣха.

[44] See V. N. Toporov, 'Poniatie sviatosti v Drevnei Rusi (Sv. Boris i Gleb)', in M. S. Flier and D. S. Worth (eds.), *Slavic Linguistics, Poetics, Cultural History: In Honor of Henrik Birnbaum on his Sixtieth Birthday, 13 December 1985* (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 451–72.

[45] Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb*, p. 64. [46] Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG*, p. 137.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

For I receive it not from my enemies, but from my own brother. And do not hold it against him as a sin, O Lord.

Both this petition, and that of the hymn cited above, derive from the final line of Stephen's prayer in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, a verse which was read aloud in early Rus every year on the saint's feast day.[48] In the passage, Stephen is stoned to death by a large crowd and with his last breath he cries out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them!'[49]

Similarly, in another place slightly earlier in the scriptures, Stephen's accusers are said to have 'looked upon him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel'.[50] This motif appears in the chronicle entry, as well, at the moment when Prince Gleb is told of his brother's death.

и нача молитисѧ съ слезами гл҃ѧ. оувы мнѣ г(с)и. луче бы ми оумрети съ братомь. нежели жити на свѣтѣ семь. аще бо быхъ брате мои видѣлъ лице твое англ(с)кое. оумерлъ бых с тобою.

He started to pray with tears, saying, 'Woe is me, O Lord. It would be better for me to die with my brother than to live on in this world. O my brother, had I only seen your angelic face, I would have died with you.'

Like the martyred apostle with the angelic countenance, Boris is depicted in the chronicle account as suffering and dying at the hands of unrighteous men, and he too spends his last mortal breath requesting that God not count their deed as a sin. The rationale behind such narrative parallels is fairly straightforward. In the liturgical tradition of the eastern church, Saint Stephen alone is called protomartyr, or first martyr, and this naturally explains why he was chosen as an archetype for Prince Boris, the first native martyr of the land of Rus.

The office of Metropolitan John and the chronicle account also share a second typological template, and this one derives from the story of Cain and Abel. In both of the early Kievan sources, Boris and Gleb are compared to the righteous younger brother from the Book of Genesis, although once more the name of their predecessor goes unmentioned. In the fifth ode of the canon chanted at matins, for instance, one finds the following verses:

Разгнѣвавъся братоубийца, яко Каинъ преже, Святопълкъ оканьный: явися законопреступьнъ и къ зависти убииство приплете, властию прельстивъся славолюбия, и отъмщения правьдьнаго не убѣжа.[51]

[48] *TAS*, ed. A. M. Pentkovskii (Moscow, 2001), p. 312. [49] Acts 7:60. [50] Acts 6:15.
[51] Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG*, p. 140.

Sviatopolk, the accursed one, raged with fratricidal [hate], like Cain of old. [He therefore] showed himself to be a transgressor of the law, deluded by power and vanity, and [in addition] to jealousy he has added murder, [for which] he has not escaped righteous vengeance.

A similar device, alluding to Cain and omitting Abel, is employed twice in the text of the chronicle tale, at both places where the elder prince sends deceitful messages to his brothers:

ст҃ополкъ же исполнивъсѧ безаконьꙗ. каиновъ смыслъ приимъ. посылаꙗ к борису гл҃ше. ꙗко с тобою хочю любовь имѣти и къ ѡтню придамь ти. а льстѧ под нимь како бы и погубити.[52]

Sviatopolk was filled with lawlessness. [He] adopted the thought of Cain, sending [messengers] to Boris, saying, 'I wish to have love with you and to add to [the inheritance from] father.' But he was lying and [plotted] how he might kill him.

стб҃полкъ же ѡканьныи помысли въ собѣ рекъ. се оубихъ борїса. како бы оубити глѣба. ї приемъ помыслъ каиновъ. с лестью посла къ глѣбу гл҃ѧ сице. поиди вборзѣ ѡц҃ь тѧ зоветь.[53]

Sviatopolk, the accursed one, thought to himself and said, 'I have killed Boris. How do I kill Gleb?' And adopting the thought of Cain, he sent deceitfully to Gleb, saying, 'Come quickly, father calls for you.'

Here again, the motives guiding the bookmen in Kiev are not particularly difficult to reconstruct. Abel was the blameless and innocent victim of the world's first fratricide. Thus, when Boris and Gleb were slain by their own brother, it naturally permitted later history writers to replant this fundamental paradigm in native soil. They were able to show the archetypal patterns of Christian salvation playing out once more in sacred history, only this time in the land of Rus.[54]

The correspondences between the first service and the chronicle tale do not end there. The sixth ode of the canon relates that Boris was pierced with a spear as he prayed to God, while the eighth ode recounts that Gleb's body was abandoned in a field to be devoured by birds and beasts.[55] The ninth ode, in contrast, provides information not found in the chronicle entry. It describes how a Varangian was burned with fire when he unintentionally defiled the brothers' gravesite, as well as how the sick and lame were miraculously healed when they touched the martyrs' coffins.[56] Apart from these few details, however, the office continues to be characterized by conventional and highly abstract tropes, adopted

[52] *PVL*, 132, 17–20. [53] *PVL*, 135, 17–20. [54] See Uspenskii, *Boris i Gleb*, pp. 29–50.
[55] Abramovich (ed.), *ZhBG*, p. 142–43. [56] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

from the services for earlier Byzantine saints. This is a point that was underscored by Mikhail Mur'ianov in 1981, when he discovered that the heirmoi (*ирмосы*) in the canon for Boris and Gleb are an exact match with the heirmoi in the canon for martyrs of a twelfth-century General Menaion, the church book containing generic services for each class of saint, with blank spaces for the name of the figure being celebrated.[57]

Looking at the textual evidence as a whole, therefore, it appears that the chronicle account and the office of Metropolitan John were indeed connected to one another, although the precise nature of this relationship is probably impossible to determine. Like Shakhmatov and Seregina, I am inclined to view the chronicle tale as the earlier source and the first office as derivative.[58] In my own hypothetical scenario, the earliest liturgical services were written some two or three decades after the brothers were murdered, as part of a top-down canonization effort, emanating from the court of Prince Iaroslav, and supported by the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Kiev. The authors of this first office were clearly more interested in writing a normative, Byzantine-style liturgical service than they were in reproducing the historical details of the brothers' demise. Accordingly, they showed a strong preference for reproducing the hymns composed for earlier saints, such as Procopius or Cyril and John, rather than writing new hymns from scratch. Moreover, as clerics immersed in the liturgical past, they instantly picked up the covert references to Abel and Stephen from the chronicle tale and made these typologies explicit in their own text, whilst also incorporating a few local details about the martyrdom, such as the information on the murder weapon and the location of Gleb's body.

One potential objection to this reconstructed version of events is particularly well founded. Why should one assume that these two texts were composed independently in the first place? Given the similarities between them, is it not possible that they were written at the same time, by the same authors, in an attempt to promote the cult in both liturgical and hagiographical formats? This explanation would be tempting indeed, were it not for a rather remarkable series of liturgical citations, never before identified in the scholarship, which occur in the chronicle account, during the panegyric for the two brothers. The chroniclers praise Boris and Gleb as 'protectors of the land of Rus' and then summon the people to glorify them with the words:

[57] M. F. Mur'ianov, 'Iz nabliudeniia nad strukturoi sluzhebnykh minei', *Problemy strukturnoi lingvistiki 1979* (1981), p. 269.

[58] Shakhmatov, *RDRLS*, p. 48. Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym*, pp. 90–94.

радуитасѧ нбснаꙗ жителѧ. въ плоти анг҃ла быста. единомысленаꙗ служителѧ. верста единоѡбразна. с҃тымъ единодш҃ьна. тѣмь стражющимъ сѣм ицѣленье подаета.[59]

Rejoice, heavenly dwellers, angels in the flesh, servants one in mind, companions one in image, of one soul with the saints. Thereby you grant healing to all that suffer.

This excerpt begins with the call to rejoice, a standard refrain employed most often in the genre of hymns known as heirmoi. The text then continues with a string of hagiographical formulas, very much like those found in the hymns for unmercenary physician saints who are venerated together as a pair, such as John and Cyrus. Since the services for these two healers were used as a template for the first office for Boris and Gleb, one might expect to find that they were also used as a model for the panegyric, especially if both texts were composed by one and the same scribe. Turning to the early medieval church books, however, one discovers that no such verses exist in the office for Saints John and Cyrus. Rather, these verses are found in the manuscripts for a different pair of wonder-working martyrs and unmercenary physicians, Saints Cosmas and Damian, twin brothers whose feast was celebrated annually on 1 November. The verses from the chronicle are repeated nearly word for word in the third sticheron at 'Lord, I have cried', which was chanted during the vespers service of their feast. The emboldened text below highlights the sections of the hymnody that match most closely with the text of the chronicle:

Вещи гноушааста сѧ на земли тлѣющаꙗ • **нб҃сьнаꙗ же зижїтелꙗ въ плътї анг҃ла быста • единомысльнаꙗ соужїтелꙗ • вьрста единообразьна с҃тыимъ и единодш҃ьна • тѣм стражющїмъ вьсѣмъ ицѣление даета** • весеребрьно дароующа блг҃одѣꙗние трѣвоующиимъ • ꙗже мольвьныимь почьтѣмъ достоїно праздникъми • дрьзновениемь молїта сѧ о дш҃ахъ нашь.[60]

Having disdained the corruptible things on earth, **[you have become] heavenly dwellers, angels in the flesh, servants one in mind, companions one in image, of one soul with the saints. Thereby you grant healing to all that suffer**, giving benefactions without pay to those in need. Let us therefore honour them worthily with celebrations, for they pray with boldness for our souls.

This direct textual borrowing might be written off as inconsequential, as a formula common to many services, if it were not for what comes next in the text of the chronicle.

[59] *PVL*, 137, 26–138, 1. [60] *MSON*, ed. I. V. Iagich (St Petersburg, 1886), vol. II, pp. 268–69.

радуитасѧ борисе и глѣбе. бомдраю. юко потока точита ѿ кладѧзѧ. воды живоносныю. ицѣленью истѣкають вѣрным людемъ на ицѣленье.[61]

Rejoice, O Boris and Gleb, the divinely wise, for like torrents you stream out life-bearing waters of healing and pour out healing on the faithful.

Here the chroniclers have again elected to borrow verses from the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian, and, what is more, they copied these verses from the beginning of the very next hymn in the church books, the fourth sticheron chanted at 'Lord, I have cried.'

Всего въсельша въ себе спса, върста прехвалнаю, **козмо и дамиюнъ ббмоуюраю, юко потока точита ѿ кладѧзѧ воды живоносьныю ицѣлению** . . .[62]

You made yourselves the abode of the Saviour, O all-praised pair Cosmas and Damian, for like torrents you stream out life-bearing waters of healing . . .

The lines that appear next in the chronicle account are just as fascinating, especially from the standpoint of liturgical history. The text of the panegyric continues:

радуитасѧ лукаваго змию поправша. свѣтозарна ювистасѧ. юко свѣтилѣ ѡзарѧюща всю землю русьскую. всегда тму ѿгонѧща. ювлѧющасѧ вѣрою неоуклоньною.[63]

Rejoice, [you] that trampled down the evil serpent, appearing as light-bearing rays, which illuminate the entire land of Rus like beacons. You always appear as those driving away the darkness by [your] immutable faith.

At this point, one might reasonably expect to find similar lines in the fifth and final sticheron chanted during the 'Lord, I have cried' segment of the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian. At first glance, however, this intuition proves to be false. The surviving twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts contain an entirely different hymn, one that lacks any resemblance to the text of the panegyric.

Yet, remarkably, if we open the modern printed edition of the Slavonic Menaion and turn to the services celebrated on 1 November, we find the following sticheron, which matches the text of the panegyric:

Все отринувше страстное мучительство и всяко размышление **лукаваго змия поправше** о Христе, святии безмездницы, Космо и Дамиане, **светообразни явистеся, яко светила, озаряюще всю подсолнечную богознаменьми всегда, тьму отгоняюще** и недуги

[61] *PVL*, 138, 1–4. [62] *MSON*, vol. II, p. 269. [63] *PVL*, 138, 1–4.

благодатию и всем спасителие являющеся, **верою неуклонною** творящим святую память вашу, премудрии.[64]

Having spurned the tyranny of passions and, in Christ, **you trampled down every plot of the evil serpent**, O holy unmercenary ones, Cosmas and Damian. **You were shown to be as radiant as beacons, ever illumining the whole world with divine signs, driving away darkness** and infirmities by grace, and showing yourselves to be the saviours of all **who with steadfast faith** celebrate your glorious memory, O all-wise ones.

The position of this hymn in the modern hymnography is also noteworthy. It appears in church books today as the third sticheron chanted in between verses of 'Lord, I have cried' during the evening rites. The present-day hymn is sung, moreover, right after the singing of modernized versions of the two stichera cited above, from the late twelfth-century manuscripts. Thus, it seems that the text of the panegyric in the chronicle comprises three consecutive citations, drawn from three festal stichera of a now-lost manuscript tradition, which were performed one after another at the vespers service for Saints Cosmas and Damian.

What we have here, then, is another instance of where historical philology can offer fresh insights into the history of liturgy, and vice versa, of where liturgical history can provide novel solutions to the problems of philology. From the perspective of the textual scholar, the fact that the first office and the first extant tale borrow almost word for word from different hymns, chanted on feast days for different saints, indicates that they were probably the works of different authors. For the historian of liturgy, on the other hand, the discovery of these three consecutive stichera in the text of the panegyric holds a different kind of significance. The only surviving manuscripts of the Menaion from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries are from Novgorod, a city in the north of Rus that was never invaded by the Mongols. The *Rus Primary Chronicle*, in contrast, was created and copied in Kiev, which was devastated by Batu Khan and his army in the year 1240. Liturgists speculate that this series of events is the reason that there are no extant redactions of the Menaion that preserve the earliest Kievan practices. The liturgical origins of the chronicle's panegyric are potentially of interest to scholars of the Byzantine rite, therefore, because they offer a fleeting glimpse into some of the ways that the extant church books from Novgorod might have differed from the non-extant church books of southern Rus. For how else can one explain the extraordinary correspondence between the modern printed church service for Cosmas and Damian and the order of

[64] *Mineia. Noiabr'* (Moscow, 2002), p. 4.

the liturgical citations in the chronicle text? It appears that the present-day services have somehow managed to preserve a slightly different redaction of the hymnography, one that reflects how these saints were commemorated in the cathedrals and monasteries of eleventh- and twelfth-century Kiev. Thus, in the final analysis, a liturgical parsing of the *pokhvala* for Princes Boris and Gleb turns out to be an instance of how interdisciplinary approaches can enrich the scholarship in multiple academic fields. In this case, and surely in many others still left to be discovered, the study of liturgy proves helpful to those scholars wishing to date historical texts and attribute authorship, while the excavation of historiographical artefacts proves to benefit liturgists looking for evidence of long-lost liturgical traditions, such as those of pre-Mongol Kiev.

It should be said at once, however, that three verses from a single panegyric are hardly the full extent of liturgy's impact on the chronicle story. On the contrary, the tale of Boris and Gleb is perhaps the most intricate articulation of Byzantine liturgy in all of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. The authors of the passage transformed political fratricide into an act of martyrdom, and they did so by making the events of a dynastic succession dispute conform to the sacred mythology of the Byzantine rite. There are three levels of liturgical subtext in the tale, in addition to those already uncovered, and I shall analyse them below in order from the least to the most complex.

THE PASSION OF PRINCE BORIS

At the most basic narrative level, the betrayal and murder of Prince Boris was loosely modelled on the passion of Jesus Christ, as recounted in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For the chroniclers of early Rus, however, the events of the passion represented far more than a certain set of biblical narratives. They were associated first and foremost with 'Holy and Great Week', a seven-day liturgical commemoration, the holiest week of the Christian year, during which the clergy and faithful ritually reenacted the decisive events of Christ's final hours on earth. The entrance into Jerusalem was celebrated on Palm Sunday, for instance, and the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday. The arrest, trial, and Crucifixion were commemorated on Good Friday, and the next morning, during the services for Holy Saturday, the faithful remembered Christ's descent into hell, as his body lay lifeless in the tomb. Holy Week ultimately culminated, of course, with the triumphal services of Pascha, or Easter, the feast of feasts, celebrating Christ's resurrection from the dead.[65]

[65] *TAS*, pp. 245–60.

The passion of Christ may have been experienced by the residents of early Rus primarily through the liturgical services, but that did not mean that Holy Scripture played no part in it. Gospel accounts of the passion were read throughout the week, usually in composite, and apropos of the events of the day. The lectionary reading at divine liturgy on Holy Thursday, for example, combined five excerpts and recounted the institution of the Eucharist, the betrayal of Judas, and Christ's agonized prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. This service was followed by the matins service for Holy Friday, a unique rite centred on the solemn reading of the 'Twelve Gospels of the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.[66] At each of these services, the hymnography complemented and elaborated on the selected readings from the New Testament. There was no distinction, no divide, between the biblical and liturgical elements. It was the whole service, Gospels and hymns together, that constituted the complete commemoration of the passion.

Year after year, the authors of the chronicle tale celebrated the services of Holy Week, and their immersion in these rituals can be felt in their writings about the martyred princes. Indeed, a case can be made that what happened to Jesus Christ on Holy Thursday and Holy Friday was also what happened to Boris in the text of the chronicle. Let us consider the following parallels between the events of the liturgical past and those of the annals for 1015:

I. Christ was depicted to as the beloved son of the heavenly father, and Boris was said to be 'beloved of his father more than all'.[67]
II. Christ rejected violence and worldly power and refused to use his Father's legions of angels to defend himself, after which he was abandoned by his disciples.[68] Boris rejected the Kievan throne and refused to use his father's soldiers to march against Sviatopolk, after which he was abandoned by the army.
III. Judas secretly plotted with the chief priests to betray Christ.[69] Sviatopolk went by night to Vyshgorod and secretly plotted with the boyars there to betray Boris.
IV. Christ was betrayed with a kiss by the lawless Judas. Boris was murdered by Sviatopolk, a man 'filled with lawlessness', after receiving tidings of peace.[70]

[66] On the reading of the Gospels during Great Lent and Holy Week, and for a list of all of the pericopes for each day, see A. A. Alekseev, *Bibliia v bogosluzhenii: Vizantiisko-slavianskii lektsionarii* (St Petersburg, 2008), pp. 75–91, 205.

[67] Luke 3:22. Matthew 17:5. *PVL*, 132, 9.

[68] Matthew 26:51–56.

[69] Luke 22:3.

[70] Matthew 26:47–50. Mark 14:43–45. *PVL*, 132, 20.

V. Christ knew of his impending death, did not resist it, and was found by his enemies praying in the garden of Gethsemane.[71] Boris knew of his impending death, did not resist it, and was found by his enemies praying the canon at matins.

VI. Christ was scourged and suffered on the Cross. Roman soldiers oversaw the execution, and upon finding him dead, one of them pierced his side with a spear. Boris likewise endured prolonged suffering. His murderers 'fell upon him like wild beasts and pierced him with spears'. The initial attack failed to kill him, however, and so Sviatopolk sent two Varangian soldiers to finish the job. One of the soldiers drew his sword and pierced Boris through the heart.[72]

The representation of martyrdom as an *imitatio Christi* was an ancient hagiographical device. In some texts, such as the second-century *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the martyr was explicitly identified as an imitator of the saviour. In others, however, the presentation was subtler. 'The martyrs imitate Christ in their words and gestures', writes Candida Moss, 'mouthing scripture and retreading the path blazed by Christ. But the imitation is never explicitly identified in the account. Christ is invisible.'[73]

The key event of the *imitatio* was suffering. The martyrs suffered as Christ suffered on the Cross. This motif appeared regularly in the church services for martyrs, as in the following sticheron chanted at the Feast of Saint Demetrios:

[Страстью] стра(с)и оуподобѧ сѧ живоносьнѣи хв҃ѣ • ѿ него дѣтель чюдесъмъ приꙗтъ • стр҃пце дьмитрие • и сп҃саеши притѣкающаꙗ ти • многъ бѣдъ и прѣгрѣшении тѣхъ избавлѧꙗ • имыи бб҃оугодьно дьрьзновение • славьне • къ бб҃оу• емоуже престоиши нынѣ.[74]

By your passion, you imitated the life-bearing passion of Christ, and from him you obtained [the gift of] miracles, O passion-bearer Demetrios. You deliver from many misfortunes and transgressions those who make recourse to you. You [therefore] have god-pleasing boldness towards God, O glorious one, before whom you now stand.

The hymn repeats the term, 'passion-bearer' (*strastoterpets*), an important concept in the eastern Christian ideology of martyrdom, and one that played a significant role in the chronicle tale. All martyrs in the eastern church were called 'passion-bearers', and the thinking behind the

[71] Matthew 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–46. [72] John 19:31–35. *PVL*, 134, 3.

[73] C. R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford, 2010), p. 4.

[74] *MSON*, vol. II, p. 181.

designation was unmistakably Pauline. By suffering in the name of Christ, martyrs came to bear his passion in their own bodies. They not only suffered like Christ but also mystically co-suffered with Christ. Their passion reenacted and shared in his original passion.[75]

What the chroniclers appear to have done in the passage for 1015 was to appropriate this ideology of passion-bearing and separate it from the other traditional topoi of the martyr's vita. They shifted the emphasis away from pagan persecution and the confession of faith, the standard idiom of conventional hagiography, and onto the *imitatio Christi*. Martyrdom was refigured as dying like Christ, not necessarily dying for Christ. Boris could therefore be venerated as a martyr, since he suffered and died as Christ suffered and died: voluntarily, meekly, 'like a lamb led to the slaughter'.[76] This concern to present Boris as a passion-bearer was probably also the reason that he famously 'died twice' in the passage.[77] If the prince were to perish immediately, without the kind of prolonged suffering experienced by Christ on the cross, then there would be no passion, only murder. But by drawing his death out across two separate attacks, the chroniclers provided Boris with a cross, that is, with an extended period of suffering that could have been understood to symbolize the Crucifixion. In so doing, they bolstered the prince's claims to sainthood, although he was technically still a victim of political fratricide. The chroniclers depicted a man who had voluntarily shared in the agony of Golgotha, and there could therefore be little doubt concerning his qualifications as a 'passion-bearing' saint.

BORIS THE PRIEST AND GLEB THE LAMB

The next liturgical subtext that I shall discuss involves the Eucharist, the sacrament celebrated at the divine liturgy, in which bread and wine were consecrated as the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Two main versions of the Eucharistic liturgy were celebrated in the medieval eastern church, the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.[78] These services survive in fairly large numbers of Euchologia (*Служебники*), and the earliest known Greek-language text, *Vat. Barberini gr. 336*, dates to the late eighth century. Both liturgies were based on the same ancient Eucharistic rites of Constantinople, and they therefore shared an unchanging core of prayers, hymns, and litanies,

[75] See Colossians 1:24, Galatians 6:17 and 2:20. [76] Isaiah 53:7.

[77] I. P. Eremin, *Literatura drevnei Rusi* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 25–26.

[78] For a history of the scholarship on these liturgies, in both Russia and the West, see T. I. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo v slavianskoi traditsii (po sluzhebnikam XI–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 2015), pp. 13–22.

many of which continue to be chanted in eastern rite churches today. Unlike printed church books of the modern era, however, early medieval manuscripts containing the two liturgies exhibit a considerable degree of diversity. They preserve a variety of divergent practices, since regional prayers and formulas often accumulated around the core Constantinopolitan structure, especially in areas far away from the centres of ecclesiastical power.[79]

In the Slavonic-speaking world, the earliest extant manuscripts of the *Sluzehbnik* are fairly late. Only fragments of this church book survive from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, though the situation begins to improve towards the end of that time frame. Mikhail Zheltov, for instance, draws in his research on a list of thirty-three *Sluzhebniki*, dating from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century, while Tat'iana Afanas'eva provides a more expansive list of eighty-four manuscripts from roughly the same period.[80] These manuscripts contain a great number of discrepancies, most of them fairly minor in nature, which reflect the fact that they were copied or translated from still earlier redactions, which possibly originated in locales as far-ranging as Constantinople, Thessalonica, Southern Italy, western and eastern Bulgaria, or even Mount Athos. The question of sources and redactions remains highly disputed, therefore, in large part because no two extant manuscripts of the *Sluzhebnik* are exactly alike, just as no two copies of the Typicon or Menaion are identical.[81] Translations, abbreviations, and instructions differ. The order, number, and content of prayers and hymns is not always the same. In some cases, certain portions of the service are missing entirely. As a result of these idiosyncrasies, it is impossible to describe a single, standardized set of practices which were used to celebrate the divine liturgy in early Rus. The vast majority of the service was undoubtedly conducted very similarly, whether one was praying in Novgorod in the late eleventh century or Kiev in the early thirteenth. But there are nevertheless segments of the early medieval divine liturgy that remain difficult to date and reconstruct, because they were very probably still in

[79] M. Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', *BT*, 41 (2007), p. 273. On the regional development of the Eucholgion, see S. Parenti and E. A. Velkovska, 'A Thirteenth Century Manuscript of the Constantinopolitan Euchology: Grottaferrata, Alias of Cardinal Bessarion', *Bollettino della badia greca di Grottaferrata* 3, 4 (2007), pp. 175–96; S. Parenti, 'The Cathedral Rite of Constantinople: Evolution of a Local Tradition', *OCP*, 77 (Rome, 2011), pp. 449–69.

[80] Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', pp. 281–83. Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, p. 24.

[81] T. I. Afanas'eva, 'Iuzhnoslavianskie perevody liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta v sluzhebnikakh XI-XV vv. iz rossiiskikh bibliotek', in L. Taseva, P. Marti, M. Iovcheva, and T. Pentkovskaia (eds.), *Mnogokratnite prevodi v Iuzhno-slavianskoto srednovekovie* (Sofia, 2006), pp. 253–55.

the process of formation. This is particularly true of the prayers and gestures that occurred at the very beginning and very end of the service, as well as for a few prayers pronounced prior to communion.[82]

I mention this rather specialized aspect of liturgy because it was very possibly these disputed prayers and procedures which helped to inspire one of the most dramatic scenes in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*: the violent murder of Prince Boris on the banks of the River Al'ta. My hypothesis is that the chroniclers depicted Boris preparing for death in much the same way that a priest prepared for the Eucharistic sacrifice, just before the start of the divine liturgy, when he entered the altar and performed the rite of Prothesis, or *Proskomedia*.[83] This suggestion is admittedly speculative, for very little is written down in the liturgical books concerning these preparatory activities before the thirteenth century. The earliest extant Greek-language liturgical text with the Prothesis, *Messina gr. 160*, is from the eleventh century. Its Slavonic-language counterpart, *Sin. 604*, dates to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century and contains only a very brief description of the preparatory procedures. A second and far more extensive description of the *Proskomedia*, more closely resembling the rite performed today, is found in a *Sluzhebnik* of the fourteenth century, *RNB Sof. 524*, and by the next century this extended form is already widespread.[84] The scarcity of pre-Mongol liturgical witnesses has led some scholars, such as Afanas'eva, to conclude that the longer, more elaborate rites for preparing the Eucharist were not known in Rus until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[85] Sergei Muretov, on the other hand, dates their appearance to the twelfth century, and he also provides a full reconstruction of the service, culled from a variety of extant manuscripts.[86] Zheltov is more reluctant to give an exact chronology for the rite of Prothesis, although he does point to several places in

[82] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, p. 36.

[83] On the historical development of this rite, see S. D. Muretov, *Istoricheskii obzor chinoposledovaniia proskomidii do 'ustava liturgii' Konstantinopol'skogo Patriarkha Filofeiia* (Moscow, 1895); G. Descoeudres, *Die Pastophorien im syro-byzantinischen Osten. Eine Untersuchung zu architektur- und liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen* (Wiesbaden, 1983); T. Pott, *Byzantine Liturgical Reform: A Study of Liturgical Change in the Byzantine Tradition* (Crestwood, 2010), pp. 197–228; M. M. Bernatskii and M. Zheltov, 'Voprosootvety mitropolita Ilii Kritskogo: Svidetel'stvo ob osobennostiakh soversheniia Bozhestvennoi liturgii v nach. XII', *Vestnik PSTGU*, 1, 14 (2005), pp. 23–53; N. Glibetić, 'An Early Balkan Testimony of the Byzantine Prothesis Rite: The Nomocanon of St Sava of Serbia († 1236)', in D. Atanassova and T. Chronz (eds.), *Synaxis Katholike: Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd Brakmann zum 70* (Vienna, 2014), pp. 239–48; N. Glibetić, 'The History of the Divine Liturgy among the South Slavs: The Oldest Cyrillic Sources (13th–14th c.)' Doctoral thesis (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome, 2013), pp. 88–137.

[84] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, pp. 27, 124–27.

[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 106–109.

[86] S. D. Muretov, *Posledovanie proskomidii, Velikogo vkhoda i prichashcheniia v slaviano-russkikh sluzhebnikakh XII–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1897).

fourteenth-century Rus manuscripts where the instructions appear to reflect practices that had already gone out of fashion in Constantinople before the early twelfth century.[87]

A rather different viewpoint has been put forward recently by the liturgist Nina Glibetič. She attributes the development of the preparation ceremony to a much earlier period, even though the contemporaneous manuscripts of the Euchologion contain no trace of them. 'The Prothesis rite was a relatively late development in Byzantine liturgical history,' writes Glibetič, 'and its emerging rubrics were not ubiquitous nor immediately incorporated into euchologies. Instead, it was other document types, such as mystagogical texts, diataxeis or patriarchal letters, that first recorded the then still-emerging preparatory rite.'[88] By way of evidence, Glibetič points to the early thirteenth-century *Nomocanon of Saint Sava of Serbia*, the oldest surviving South Slavic source for the rites of preparation, which she believes preserved a rather archaic Prothesis ordo. She shows that the opening of the *Nomocanon* comprises an extensive direct citation from the *Historia ecclesiastica*, a mystagogical commentary traditionally attributed to the eighth-century Patriarch of Constantinople, Germanos I. This Greek text had suffered numerous interpolations, and appeared in numerous redactions, by the time it was translated into Latin by the papal librarian Anastasius, during his sojourn in the Imperial City in 869–70.[89] Among the passages translated by the librarian, there was one which included an elaborate description of the Prothesis rite. It was based on Germanos' commentary but also updated to reflect the practices of ninth-century Constantinople. According to Glibetič, the *Nomocanon of Saint Sava* preserved this second, later description of the rituals, although there were a few noteworthy differences between the two texts, most of which concerned the precise details of how the holy bread was to be cleansed and partitioned.[90] What Glibetič seems to be suggesting, therefore, is that the *Proskomedia* service might have developed much sooner in the history of the Byzantine rite than some liturgists have previously suspected. It was possibly known in detail to Patriarch Germanos, who died in the year 730, and it was apparently familiar to Anastasius' sources in ninth-century Constantinople. The rite was not yet represented in the text of the Euchologion, where one would later come to find it, but

[87] Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', pp. 329–30.

[88] Glibetič, 'An Early Balkan Testimony of the Byzantine Prothesis Rite', p. 242.

[89] On the translations of Anastasius, see B. Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius* (Turnhout, 2006).

[90] Glibetič, 'An Early Balkan Testimony of the Byzantine Prothesis Rite', pp. 239–44.

clerics evidently still knew of the service from other kinds of written sources.

If this were the situation in Byzantium, moreover, it might also have been the situation in the land of Rus. It is possible that entrance prayers and the rite of Prothesis were familiar to the clerics of eleventh-century Kiev, before they came to be consistently recorded in liturgical books. It is also possible that the clergy performed these gestures from an alternative written source, which has not managed to survive. Nothing equivalent to the *Nomocanon of Saint Sava* has survived in the archival collections of early Rus from before the late thirteenth century. But there is another kind of evidence for the existence of these rites apart from church books or ecclesiastical manuals. In fact, there is a manuscript, containing elements of no-longer extant entrance prayers and preparatory gestures, which can be dated to a period *before* the late twelfth century.

The tale of Boris and Gleb is precisely this text. It probably dates, at the very latest, to the second decade of the twelfth century, and many scholars are comfortable placing its composition some fifty to seventy-five years earlier. There is not a single study of Slavonic liturgy, so far as I know, which attempts to offer such an early date for the Prothesis rite, or certain other of the entrance prayers. Nevertheless, the chronicle account provides evidence that these prayers did indeed exist, in some form, in late eleventh-century Kiev. To be clear, I am not claiming that the fuller, more complex rites of the fourteenth and fifteenth century were necessarily performed in the city, in exactly the manner in which they were recorded in later liturgical manuscripts. Rather, I wish only to suggest that some of the prayers and rites performed before the start of the divine liturgy, which some liturgical scholars attribute to a much later period, were very possibly being performed by clerics in the land of Rus, long before the Mongol Invasions. Such a claim is legitimate, moreover, because I am convinced that the Eucharistic subtext interwoven into the tale of Boris and Gleb was the work of Kievan clerics who were familiar with these preparatory rituals and with the daily liturgical ordo, more generally. Indeed, I should like to suggest that from the time Sviatopolk's assassins arrived in Al'ta, to the moment Gleb is ambushed and killed, the order of the liturgical materials in the chronicle text approximately mirrors the order in which these materials were prayed at matins and divine liturgy.

Thus, when Boris arose on the last morning of his life, he began to pray in the words of the Six Psalms (*Шестопсалмие)*, the very first prayers of the matins service. He opened with Psalm 3:1, the first verse of the first of the Six Psalms. The next phrases he chanted were from the second of the Six Psalms, Psalm 38:2 and 38:18–19, and the verses following those were

from the sixth and final psalm, Psalm 142:1–3. The chronicle then states that Boris, 'having finished the six psalms . . . saw that men were sent to kill him, and he began to chant the psalter'.[91] In Byzantine monastic liturgical practice, the Psalter was divided into twenty sections called *kathisma*, and at least one of these sections was read daily during the matins service.[92] The verses Boris proceeded to chant in the text were Psalm 22:13 and 22:17, and these were hardly chosen at random. According to ancient Christian tradition, Psalm 22 was the Christological psalm *par excellence*, depicting the Messiah's future suffering and even foretelling specific details of the Crucifixion. Here again, the chroniclers were foregrounding the *imitatio*: for as Boris prepared to endure his 'passion', he recited psalmodic prophecies of Christ's own passion.

Following the *kathisma* readings, Boris continued to follow the ordo for the matins service by moving onto the canon, the nine-ode hymn based on biblical canticles, which was chanted during the morning service:

посемь же нача канунъ пѣти. таче кончавъ заоутреню. помолісѧ гл҃ѧ зрѧ на икону на ѡбразъ вл(д)чнь гл҃ѧ сице. г(с)и іс(с) хс(с) иже симь ѡбразомь ꙗвисѧ на земли. сп҃сньꙗ ради нашего. изволивъ своею волею пригвоздити на кр(с)тѣ руцѣ свои. и приимъ стр(с)ть грѣхъ ради наших. тако и мене сподоби приꙗти стр(с)ть. се же не ѿ противныхъ приимаю. но ѿ брата своего. и не створи ѥму г(с)и в семь грѣха. и помолившюсѧ ему. възлеже на ѡдрѣ своем. и се нападоша акы звѣрье дивии ѡколо шатра. и насунуша и копьи.[93]

After that he started to sing the canon. Then, having finished matins, [Boris] gazed on icon, on an image of the Lord, saying this: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, as you appeared in this image on earth for the sake of our salvation, and of your own will stretched out your hands upon the cross, and accepted the passion on account of our sins, so help me to accept my passion. For I receive it not from my enemies, but from my own brother. And do not hold it against him as a sin, O Lord.' After offering this prayer, he lay down on his bed. And then they fell on him like wild beasts within the tent and pierced him with spears.

91 *PVL*, 133, 14–16.

92 On the psalter in early Rus, see V. Sreznevskii, *Drevnii slavianskii perevod Psaltiri* (St Petersburg, 1877); M. Altbauer and H. G. Lunt, *An Early Slavonic Psalter from Rus'* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); G. I. Vzdornov, *Issledovanie o Kievskoi Psalteri* (Moscow, 1978); C. M. MacRobert, 'The Textual Tradition of the Church Slavonic Psalter up to the Fifteenth Century', in J. Krašovec (ed.), *Interpretation of the Bible* (Liubliana-Sheffield, 1998), pp. 921–42; A. A. Alekseev, *Tekstologiia Slavianskoi Biblii* (St Petersburg, 1999), pp. 22–23; E. I. Lozovaia and B. L. Fonkich, 'O proiskhozhdenii Khuldovskoi Psaltiri', *Drevnerusskoe uskusstvo: Iskusstvo rukopisnoi knigi – Vizantiia. Drevniaia Rus'* (St Petersburg, 2004), pp. 222–41; O. I. Zhivaeva, 'Rukopisnye psaltiri v bogosluzhebnoi traditsii drevnei rusi', *Vestnik OGU*, 11 (2012), pp. 14–20.

93 *PVL*, 133, 3–134, 3.

This narrative is pious, plausible, and straightforward. Boris prays, using the words of the morning worship service, then says a final prayer of his own, before suffering a brutal attack. Yet for those familiar with the rite of Prothesis, the first part of the divine liturgy performed privately prior to the public service, these events suggest a different reading. They indicate that Boris' performance of the liturgical rites did not stop when he concluded with matins. In fact, his next prayer was a version of the prayer said by the officiating priest, as he prepared to enter the altar before serving *Proskomedia*. The liturgical ordo moved from matins to the entrance prayers for divine liturgy, and the actions of Prince Boris mirrored this progression.

The problem with such an interpretation is that these entrance prayers, according to some scholars, may not have existed in early Rus at the time when the chronicle tale was composed. Zheltov has observed that twenty-two out of the thirty-three surviving versions of the earliest native *Sluzhebniki* contain a prayer pronounced before the start of the service, but this prayer is nothing like the prayer said in the chronicle by Boris. It is also unaccompanied in the texts by any additional prayers, troparia, or psalms, which possibly indicates that a more elaborate preparatory ritual was not yet celebrated in Rus.[94] My hypothesis might therefore appear to be false: nothing more than an anachronistic projection of a later service onto an earlier liturgical era that had no such practices. Such a conclusion would surely be unavoidable, in fact, were it not for the texts of two *Sluzhebniki*, written in different alphabets, and separated in time by nearly half a millennium. The first of these is preserved in the oldest surviving Slavonic-language Euchologion, the so-called *Sinaiskii Sluzhebnik*, an eleventh-century Bulgarian text, composed in Glagolitic, which was discovered in the library of Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in 1850.[95] The second text is from the earliest printed edition of the *Sluzhebnik*, published in Moscow by a certain Andronik Timofeev Nevezha on 25 April 1602.[96]

In this latter volume, in the segment devoted to the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, there appeared an elaborate set of instructions for

[94] Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', pp. 304, 328–29.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 340. See also J. Frček (ed.), *Euchologium Sinaiticum: Texte slave avec sources greques et traduction française* (Paris, 1933); L. Politis, 'Nouveaux manuscrits grecs découverts au Mont Sinai: Rapport préliminaire Scriptorium', *Revue internationale des études relatives aux manuscrits médiévaux*, 34 (1980), pp. 5–17; I. C. Tarnanidis, *The Slavonic Manuscripts Discovered in 1975 at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai* (Thessalonica, 1988).

[96] *Sluzhebnik. Moskva: Andronik Timofeev Nevezha, 25 Aprelia 1602*, www.dlib.rsl.ru/viewer/01002158894#?page=1 (accessed August 2018).

priests and deacons 'wishing to perform the divine mysteries'.[97] These clerics were instructed to stand in front of the royal doors, intone the opening blessing, and read a set of introductory prayers, which included the Trisagion, the Lord's Prayer, and several prayers to the Mother of God. Next, the celebrants were commanded to approach the icon of Christ on the iconostasis, kiss it, and say the following prayer, attributed to Patriarch Germanos I of Constantinople:

Гй ісе̃ хе̃, иже симъ образомъ ꙗвльсѧ на земли, сп̃сенїѧ ради нашего, і изволивъ своею волею пригвоздити рꙋцѣ свои и нозѣ и давый намъ кр(с)тъ свои на прогнанїе всѧкаго врага и сопостата, помилви ны на тѧ оуповающи.[98]

O Lord Jesus Christ, as you appeared in this image on earth for the sake of our salvation, and were pleased of your own will to stretch out your hands, and your feet, and gave us your cross for the expulsion of every enemy and adversary, have mercy on those that hope in you.

The parallels between this ritual gesture and those of Prince Boris in the chronicle text are striking. Like the officiating priest before the divine liturgy, Boris venerates an icon of Christ, refers to that icon in his prayer, and speaks to the image as if to the saviour himself. More remarkably, though, the prince began his prayer in the chronicle by repeating virtually verbatim the eighteen words emboldened in the prayer above:

г(с)и іс(с) хс(с) иже симь ѡбразомь ꙗвисѧ на земли. сп̃сньꙗ ради нашего. изволивъ своею волею пригвоздити на кр(с)тѣ **руцѣ свои** . . .[99]

O Lord Jesus Christ, as you appeared in this image on earth for the sake of our salvation, and were pleased of your own will to stretch out your hands upon the cross . . .

How might one explain the nearly identical correspondence between these lines and the words of Germanos' prayer in the printed *Sluzhebnik*? Is it evidence that this entrance prayer, or at least some version of it, was known and used in pre-Mongol Rus, even though nothing survives in the extant Euchologia? Or is it simply a coincidence, a case where the chronicle text and the church books happened to share a common liturgical *incipit*? A solution to these questions can be found, I believe, in the opening fragments of the more ancient *Sinaiskii Sluzhebnik*. There, in the very first folio, just before the start of the text of the divine liturgy, one finds the 'prayer for the kissing of the cross' ('молитва целующе крест'). According to Mikhail Zheltov, this prayer 'corresponded to the well-known custom of kissing the cross upon entering a church in ancient

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 60. [98] *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65. [99] *PVL*, 133, 23–25.

Rus, a practice that is preserved even to the present day in archiepiscopal liturgical services'.[100] The prayer that accompanied this entrance rite, Zheltov maintains, was none other than that of Patriarch Germanos: 'Г҃и іс҃е х҃е, иже симъ образомъ ꙗвльсѧ на земли . . . '/ 'O Lord Jesus Christ, as you appeared in this image on earth . . .'[101] The same prayer therefore appears to have been said at roughly the same place in the liturgical ordo, in three different texts, produced in three different eastern Christian cities, over a span of some 600 years. This information is obviously not enough, on its own, to rewrite the history of the *proskomedia* service in early Rus. But at the very least, it might encourage us to take seriously the notion that Boris' prayer was based on the text of an ancient entrance prayer, which was read before the start of the service, although not necessarily from the *Sluzhebnik*.

The second half of Prince Boris' prayer also appears to reflect the contents of a now-lost early medieval entrance prayer. Shortly before the verses attributed to Germanos, the *Sluzhebnik* of 1602 contains the following words:

Преч(с)томꙋ ти ѡбразꙋ покланѧемсѧ, Бл҃гий, просѧще прощенїѧ прегрѣшенїемъ нашимъ, х҃е б҃же, волею бо благоизволилъ еси плотию взыти на кр(с)тъ, да избавиши, ꙗже созда ѿ работы вражїѧ, тѣмъ бл҃годарѧще вопїем ти, радости исполнивыи всѧ, сп҃се наш, пришедыи сп(с)ти миръ.[102]

We venerate your immaculate icon, O Good One, asking the forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God. For of your own will you were well-pleased to ascend the cross and deliver those whom you created from the work of the enemy. Wherefore, we cry to you gratefully, 'You filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, [when] you came to save the world.'

Similarities between this prayer and the last few lines of Boris's prayer are again apparent. The priest declared that Christ ascended the cross in the flesh of his own will, and Boris declared that Christ's hands were nailed to the cross of his own will. The priest said that Christ came to save the world, and Boris said that Christ appeared on earth for human salvation. The priest connected the passion to the forgiveness of sins, and the prince said that he accepted his passion on account of human sin.

100 Zheltov, 'Chin Bozhestvennoi liturgii v drevneishikh (XI–XIV vv.) slavianskikh Sluzhebnikakh', p. 341.

101 *Ibid*. For an alternative explanation, which attributes the origins of the 'prayer for the kissing of the cross' to a twelfth-century Roman-German sacramentary, see Afanas'eva, 'K voprosu o poriadke sledovaniia listov i sostave Sinaiskogo glagolicheskogo Sluzhebnika XI v.', *Palaeobulgarica* 29, 3 (2005), p. 26.

102 *Sluzhebnik. Moskva: Andronik Timofeev Nevezha, 25 Aprelia 1602*, pp. 63–64.

The events that follow Boris' prayer were also very telling. Having performed the prerequisite entrance prayers, Boris offered himself to God in the same fashion that the *prosphora*, the loaf of unleavened bread used for the Eucharist, was offered to God by the priest during the Prothesis. Once more, a detailed description of the liturgical rite is in order, and this time I shall draw on the earliest surviving Rus copy of the South Slavic *Nomocanon*, which was copied in Riazan' at the end of the thirteenth century.[103] According to the instructions in this manuscript, after the opening prayers had been recited, the priest took the prosphora from the deacon, cleansed the special liturgical knife used to cut it, and then made the sign of the cross over the loaf. At the same time, he prayed the following verses from Isaiah 53:7–8, also known as the prophecy of the suffering servant:

ꙗко ѡвьчѧ на заколенье веденъ бысть • и ꙗко агнець прѧмостригоущемоу безъгласенъ • тако не ѿвергает осуть своихъ въ смѣреньи своемь • соуд его възѧтьсѧ род же его кто исповѣсть • ꙗко въземлетьсѧ ѿ землѧ животъ его.

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And like a spotless lamb before its shearers is dumb, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgement was taken away. Who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth.

As he said these words, the celebrant placed the prosphora on the paten, a small plate used to hold the host during the consecration. He then proceeded to cut a large piece out of the middle of the loaf, and while cutting that piece left-to-right in the shape of a cross, he prayed:

Жретсѧ агнець б҃ии вземлѧи грѣх всего мира.

Sacrificed is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Next, the priest retrieved the holy chalice and mixed the wine together with water, while he said another short invocation prayer. When he was finished with that, he said still another prayer associating the Eucharistic sacrifice with the passion of Christ:

единъ ѿ воинъ • копьемь емоу ребра прободе • и абье изиде изъ ребра и҃сва кровь и вода • и видѣвъ свѣдѣтельствова • и истинно есть свѣдѣтельство его.[104]

One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water from the side of Jesus. He who saw it has borne witness and his witness is true.

[103] RNB, F.p.II.1, f. 274. Reproduced in Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo,* pp. 125–26.
[104] *Ibid.*

What happened to the prosphora during this ritual also happened to Boris as he was murdered. In the chronicle tale, the prince meekly accepted death like 'a sheep led to the slaughter' and opened 'not his mouth' as he endured attack. The prosphora was laid upon the paten and repeatedly cut into with the holy knife, and Boris lay upon his bed and was repeatedly cut into by spears. The chroniclers use the word *kop'i*, or spear, and the *Nomocanon* explicitly reminded priests at the outset of the *Proskomedia* service about the connection between this liturgical instrument and the weapon used to pierce the saviour on the cross:

... въ копьꙗ бо мѣсто прободъшаго х(с)а на кр(с)тѣ, есть се копье рекъше ноже, имьже закалаетсѧ агнець.[105]

... the spear which pierced the [side] of Christ on the cross is the very spear which is called the knife, with which the lamb is impaled.

The prosphora was cut and pierced in order to form the holy bread, the lamb (*агнець*), which was sacrificed later on in the divine liturgy. As we shall see shortly, Boris was also cut and pierced as preparation for the 'lamb' that was sacrificed later on in the chronicle tale. For those readers familiar with how the Eucharist was prepared, the death of Boris therefore appeared as the next step in a carefully ordered liturgical sequence. The prince had sung matins and the entrance prayers, and now he 'served' *Proskomedia* by physically undergoing what the prosphora underwent as it was prepared for the Eucharistic sacrifice.

That Boris simultaneously underwent his 'passion' and performed the liturgical rites, in approximately the order that they were prescribed in the church books, was also perfectly consistent with the mystagogy of the eastern church. For the Byzantines, the Passion and the Lord's Supper were inextricably linked. These events were commemorated and mystically made present during each divine liturgy by Christ himself, who was both celebrant and victim, the mystical high priest who offered the eternal sacrifice, and the one who was sacrificed. This theology was articulated, among other places, in the prayer that the priest addressed to Christ during the singing of the cherubic hymn:

Никтоже достоинь свезавшиихсе сь пльтьскыми похотми и сластьми прихшдити или приближатисе • или слоужити тебѣ ц҃рю славы • еже бо слоужити тебѣ велико и страшно • и тѣмь нб҃сныимь силамь • нь ѡбаче неизре(ч)нааго ради и безмѣрнааго ти чл҃колюбиа • непрѣложень и неизмѣнень бывь чл҃кь • и ст҃ль намь быль еси • слоужебные сее и бескрьвные жртвы с҃щеньство прѣдаль еси нам ꙗко вл(д)ка всѣхь ...

105 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

ты бо еси приносеи и приносимыи, приемлюи раздаваемыи х҃е б҃е нашъ • и тебѣ славоу вьсылаемъ . . .[106]

No one who is bound with the desires of the flesh is worthy to approach or draw near to serve you, O king of glory. For to serve you is great and awesome even to the heavenly powers. Nevertheless, for the sake of your unspeakable and boundless love for mankind, you became man, without change or alteration, and as ruler of all you have become our high priest, and have committed to us the celebration of this liturgical and bloodless sacrifice . . . For you are the offerer and the offered, the receiver and the received, O Christ our God, and to you we ascribe glory . . .

Like Christ in the liturgy, in the chronicle tale Boris was both priest and victim, although the analogy is not perfect. Prince Boris was the one who offered sacrifice, who 'served' the liturgical rites, and yet he was *not* the sacrifice that was offered. Rather, the sacrifice that was offered in the passage was his younger brother, Prince Gleb.

Crucially, Boris was never called a 'lamb or a 'sacrifice' in the text. He was depicted as the priest who prepared the sacrifice, and his body, pierced by spears, was depicted as the prosphora being prepared for that sacrifice. But the *Proskomedia* service was not the Eucharist, merely the preparation for it. The bread and wine only became the broken body and spilled blood of Christ during the anaphora, when the priest performed the most solemn part of the divine liturgy. It was precisely this part of the service, moreover, which was used to describe the murder of Gleb. The chronicle recorded the moment of the prince's death in the following manner:

поваръ же глѣбовъ именемь торчинъ. вынезъ ножь зарѣза глѣба. акы агнѧ непорочно. принесесѧ на жертву б҃ви в воню б҃лгооуханьꙗ. жертва словеснаꙗ.[107]

Gleb's cook, Torchin by name, taking up a knife, stabbed Gleb, like a spotless lamb. Thus he was brought to God as a sacrifice, a sweet-smelling fragrance, a rational sacrifice.

Prince Gleb was here identified with the 'spotless lamb' from the *Proskomedia* ritual, the lamb that is 'brought to God as a sacrifice' during the consecration rites. Moreover, he was specifically a 'rational sacrifice' offered to God as 'a sweet-smelling fragrance' because these were the

[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 325–26. On the historical formation of this prayer, see R. Taft, 'The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaforal Rites of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom', *OCA*, 200 (1975), pp. 121–22, 147–48.

[107] *PVL*, 136, 20–24.

precise epithets used to describe the Eucharist in the 'prayer of the offering' (*молитва приношение*), pronounced at the Liturgy of St Basil:

Гй бж҃е нашь • сьздавыи ны • и приведь вь жизнь сию • сказавыи намь поуть сп҃сению • даровавыи намь нб҃сныихъ таинъ ѿ крьвение • ты еси положивыи на(с) вь слоужбоу сию силою дх҃а твоего ст҃го • благоволи же гй быти намь слоугамь новомоу твоемоу завѣтоу слоужещимь ст҃ымь твоимь таннамь • приими на(с) приближающихъсе ст҃моу твоемоу жрьтьвникоу по множьству милости твоее • да боудемь достоини приносити тебѣ **словесноую сию и бескрьвноую жрьтвоу** ѡ нашихъ грѣсѣхъ и ѡ лю(д)скы(х) невѣдѣниихь • еже прием вь ст҃ыи и прѣнбс҃ныи и мысльныи твои жрьтвникь **вь воню благоуханиа** • вьспосли намь благ(д)ть ст҃го твоего дх҃а • призри на ны бж҃е и вьзри на слоужбоу нашоу сию . . .[108]

O Lord our God, who has created us, and has brought us into this life, who has shown us the path to salvation, and has bestowed on us the revelation of heavenly mysteries: you are the one who has appointed us to this service in the power of your Holy Spirit. O Lord, enable us to be ministers of your new testament and servants of your holy mysteries. Through the abundance of your mercy, accept us as we draw near to your holy altar, so that we may be worthy to offer to you this **rational and bloodless sacrifice** for our sins and for the errors of your people. Grant that, having accepted this sacrifice upon your holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar **as a sweet-smelling fragrance**, you may in return send down upon us the grace of your Holy Spirit. Look down on us, O God, and behold this our service.

As this prayer makes clear, Prince Gleb was offered to God in the chronicle using very much the same language that the priest used within the altar to offer the Eucharist to God during the anaphora. And just as the Eucharistic sacrifice consummated the offering that was prepared during the *Proskomedia* rite, so Gleb's 'rational sacrifice' consummated the rites of preparation which were performed by his brother earlier in the passage. Looking at the narrative as a whole, therefore, the fundamental structure of the chronicle story was Eucharistic. Boris was the high priest who prepared the offering and Gleb was the lamb that was mystically sacrificed.

'BISHOP VLADIMIR' AND HIS MARTYRED SONS

The Eucharistic subtext of Boris and Gleb's martyrdom was unusual, although not completely unprecedented.[109] Martyrs often imitated the passion of Christ, but they rarely served liturgical rites or died as

[108] Afanas'eva, *Liturgii Ioanna Zlatousta i Vasiliia Velikogo*, p. 328.

[109] On possible Eucharistic echoes in the text of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, see Moss, *The Other Christs*, p. 84.

Eucharistic sacrifices. The question, then, is why the chroniclers would have elected to introduce such complexities into the tale. One possible solution may be found in the Rite of Consecration for a Church, the service discussed in the preceding chapter in connection with Prince Vladimir's construction of the Church of the Tithes in 996. In that section, I suggested that Vladimir was depicted as the bishop who founded Christianity in Rus, since he was shown consecrating a church with the prayers that only a bishop was permitted to pray during the liturgy. The chroniclers were evidently familiar with these prayers for the founding of a new church, therefore, and they may have guided their large-scale historical conception of the Christianization of Rus. Indeed, when we consider what a bishop said and did during the consecration rite, what he prayed about and what he asked for, it reveals a crucial link between Vladimir's role as bishop and the martyrdom of his sons Boris and Gleb. The text of the rite cited below is a Slavonic reconstruction of the service created by Mikhail Zheltov in modern orthography, which he based on the contents of two eleventh-century Byzantine Euchologia, *ms B. N. Paris Coislin gr. 213* and *ms B. M. Grottaferrata gr. Gb. I.*[110]

The episcopal prayers contained in these manuscripts convey a detailed narrative about the establishment of Christianity in a new land. The two key figures in the narrative were bishops and martyrs. At the beginning of the service, the bishop said a long prayer that testified to his direct succession from the apostles. He anointed the altar table with holy chrism and then prayed:

Боже безначальный и вечный, Иже от не сущих в бытие вся приведый, Иже во свете неприступнем живый, и престол имеяй небо, землю же подножие: Иже Моисеови повеление давый и начертания, Веселиилу же дух премудрости вложивый: и увдолив их к совершению скинии свидетельства, в которой служения оправдания бяху образы и предначертания истины: Иже Соломону широту и пространство серца даровавый и чрез него древний храм возставивый: святым же и всехвальным Твоим апостолам обновивый службу в духе и благодать истинныя скинии: и чрез них святыя Церкви и жертвенники Твоя, Господи сил, во всей земли насадивый, во еже приноситися Тебе мысленным и безкровным жертвам: Иже и сему храму ныне благоволил еси создатися во имя святаго имярек, к славе Твоей и единороднаго Твоего Сына и всесвятаго Твоего Духа.[111]

110 M. Zheltov, 'Chin osviashcheniia khrama i polozheniia sviatikh moshchei v vizantiiskikh Evkhologiiakh XI veka', in A. M. Lidov (ed.), *Relikvii v isskustve i kul'ture vostochnokhristianskogo mira* (Moscow, 2000), pp. 111–26.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

O God, without beginning and eternal, Who calls all things from nothingness into being, Who dwells in light unapproachable, and has the heavens for a throne, and the earth for a footstool; Who gave a law and pattern to Moses and inspired Bezaleel with the spirit of wisdom, and Who enabled them to complete the building of the tabernacle of your covenant, wherein ordinances of divine worship were instituted which were the images and types of the truth; Who bestowed on Solomon breadth and greatness of heart, and through him raised the ancient temple; Who renewed your holy and all-laudable Apostles in the service of the Spirit, and the grace of the true tabernacle, and through them, O Lord of Hosts, You planted your holy churches and altars in all the earth, that there might be offered unto You intellectual and bloodless sacrifices; Who also has been pleased to found this church, in the name of [church's name] to your glory, and to the glory of your only-begotten Son, and of your all-holy Spirit . . .

This prayer charted God's selection of certain figures, in generation after generation, to build temples and offer sacrifices: a divine economy that continued into the present with the offering of 'intellectual sacrifices' on the altars 'planted' throughout the world by the apostles and their successors, the bishops of the eastern church.

These sacrifices were offered, quite literally, on the bones of the martyrs. According to the instructions in the church books, an altar was to be consecrated using the relics of a martyr and those relics needed to remain within it in order for the Eucharist to be celebrated. This connection between the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacrifice of the martyrs was emphasized in the 'prayer of the placing of the relics' ('молитва положения мощей'), which the bishop said as he solemnly inserted the martyr's relics into the altar during the ceremony:

Господи Боже наш, Иже и сию славу даровавый о Тебе пострадавшым святым мучеником, еже сеятися по всей земли мощем их, во святый храмех Твоих, и плоды исцелений прозябати: Сам, Владыко, всех благих податель Сый, молитвами святых, ихже мощей благоизволил еси в сем честнем храме Твоем положению быти: удостой нас неосужденно приносити Тебе в нем безкровную жертву . . .[112]

O Lord our God, Who bestowed on the holy Martyrs who suffered for your sake this glory, that their relics should be sown in all the earth, in your holy churches, and should bring forth fruits of healing: Enable us Yourself, O Master, the giver of all good things, through the prayers of the saints whose relics You have graciously permitted to be placed in this Your venerable altar, to offer to You without condemnation the bloodless sacrifice . . .

The bishop asked for more than just the intercessions of the martyrs, however. In another prayer, the 'prayer of the translation of relics'

[112] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

(*молитва перенесения мощей*), he explicitly requested that those consecrating the church may themselves become martyrs:

Господи Боже наш, верный в словесех Твоих и неложный во обещаниих Твоих, даровавый святым Твоим мучеником подвизатися добрым подвигом, и совершити путь благочестия, и веру истиннаго исповедания сохранити: Сам, Владыко всесвятый, умолен буди молением их, и даруй нам недостойным рабам Твоим имети часть и наследие с ними, да быв их подражателями, сподобимся и предлежащих им благ . . .[113]

O Lord our God, faithful in your words and truthful in your promises, Who has granted your holy martyrs to fight the good fight and to fulfil the course of godliness and to keep the faith of true confession: Be entreated, all-holy Lord, of their prayers and grant to us your unworthy servants, to have a part and inheritance with them, that being imitators of them, we also may obtain the good things which await them . . .

In short, when a bishop established a new church he asked God to make his flock like the martyrs, and he then used the relics of martyrs in order to consecrate a new altar for the offering of liturgical sacrifices.

These consecration rituals may have provided the overarching narrative structure for the 996 and 1015 chronicle entries. Let us consider the following parallels:

I. The chroniclers depicted Vladimir as the 'bishop' who founded the church in Rus. Since a new church must be consecrated with the relics of a martyr, the chroniclers also made sure to show Vladimir returning from Cherson with the relics of St Clement, a first-century martyr, and his disciple, Phoebus.
II. A bishop prayed that those consecrating a new church would become 'imitators' of the martyrs. 'Bishop Vladimir' consecrated a new church and his sons, Boris and Gleb, subsequently became martyrs, thereby obtaining 'the good things which await them'.
III. In the consecration rite, the bishop prayed that the martyr's bones, sealed in the altar, would enable the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Similarly, in the chronicle tale, the martyrical 'passion' of Boris enabled the offering of Gleb as a Eucharistic sacrifice.

Understood within its native liturgical context, therefore, the martyrdom of Boris and Gleb in the year 1015 appeared to have been an answer to the prayers that a bishop would have said at the consecration of a church.

[113] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

There was also a historical reason that Boris and Gleb might have been linked with the Rite of Consecration for a Church. As Nadezhda Seregina has shown, the pre-Mongol corpus of hymns for the martyred brothers was three times larger than that of a typical service. She believes the manuscripts therefore represented not one but three separate services. She dates the earliest of these services to the reign of Iaroslav the Wise and suggests it was composed for the translation of Boris and Gleb's relics into a new wooden church built in their honour. The other services were connected to two later translation ceremonies, when the relics were again transferred into new churches, first in 1072 and then again in 1115. Aleksandr Uzhankov, meanwhile, has observed that on all three of these occasions the consecration of the new church was likely celebrated on the same day as the translation service, which was itself conducted on the brothers' annual feast day on 24 July. Thus, it seems possible that by the beginning of the twelfth century, there was already an established liturgical connection in the land of Rus between the martyred sons of Vladimir and the rites for consecrating a church.[114]

Taken together, these narrative and historical parallels suggest that a comprehensive liturgical subtext may have informed the making of the two chronicle passages. The subtext, once recovered, permits for a new and perhaps provocative reading of the story of the Christianization of Rus. During the consecration rite, an officiating bishop asked God for martyrs and liturgical sacrifices and that is precisely what the tale of Boris and Gleb ultimately provided. Vladimir 'planted' a new altar in Kiev; Boris, by bearing his own passion, prepared the oblation for this altar; and Gleb, the spotless lamb, was the 'rational sacrifice' offered upon it. A Christian community built on the bones of the martyrs, which offered to God martyrs of its own: this was the myth of the spread of Christianity enunciated in the Byzantine consecration rite, and in the late eleventh century, or thereabouts, it become a central part of the myth of Christian origins in the *Rus Primary Chronicle*.

[114] Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym*, pp. 77–98. Uzhankov, 'Sviatye strastoterptsy Boris i Gleb', pp. 37–49.

CONCLUSION:
The Making of Royal Saints in Early Rus

In the chronicle entry for the year 1044, the bones of two pagan princes were unearthed, baptised, and laid to rest in the Church of the Tithe in Kiev.

В лѣт. ѕ҃.ф.н҃в. И выгребоша .в҃. кнѧзѧ ꙗрополка и ѡльга. сна с҃тославлѧ. и кр(с)тиша кости ею. и положиша ꙗ въ цркви с҃тыꙗ бц҃а.[1]

In the year 6552 (1044). Two princes, Iaropolk and Oleg, the sons of Sviatoslav, were exhumed, and their bones were baptised, and placed in the church of the Holy Mother of God.

The scene is an apt metaphor for the role of liturgy in the making of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. Like the clerics baptising those bones, the chroniclers in Kiev used the rites and sacraments of the Byzantine church in order to Christianize the distant past. I have argued in this book so far that the result was a version of history at once sacred and profane. The emperor flirted with Olga before her baptism. Vladimir accepted Christianity to secure an imperial marriage. Gleb was stabbed by his cook. The chroniclers did not purify the past of its intrigues. Neither did they reinvent it with details and narratives solely of their own imagining. Rather, they gathered together disparate traditions – oral and written, native and foreign, pagan and clerical – and edited them into a coherent myth about the rise of Christianity in Rus.

Liturgical repetition had taught the Rus more than just the contents of sacred history, however. The celebration of the liturgy had also taught them how to enter that history for themselves. By praying the divine services, day after day and year after year, the clerics slowly internalized the sacred myths and the narrative paradigms of national conversion. With each revolution around the sun, they celebrated the feast of Saints Constantine and Helena and hundreds of other feasts dedicated to holy

[1] *PVL,* 155, 4–6. first

forerunners, passion-bearing martyrs, righteous mothers, and chosen kings. By means of constant repetition, the churchmen gradually learned that the liturgical past had a consistent narrative shape, and in the late eleventh and early twelfth century they began to project that shape onto the native past. They began to construct versions of local history that conformed to the sacred patterns of Roman liturgical history.

What this meant, practically speaking, was that the clergy started to write tales and keep chronicles that russified the East Roman conversion myths. Like draftsmen working with a stencil, they traced out a Christian past that reproduced the sacred liturgical paradigms. Vladimir was transformed into a new Constantine and Olga into a second Helena. Boris and Gleb, two junior princes slain in a succession battle, were remade into the first martyrs of Rus. This rendering was far from arbitrary or accidental, yet neither was it necessarily a conscious choice. It was simply the story that thousands and thousands of hours of liturgical worship had trained these clerics to write.

The sacred rites shaped this new story in many and diverse ways. As we have seen in this study, a vast array of liturgical narratives, typologies, allusions, and citations were interwoven throughout the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. Some of these materials are rather obvious, others so intricate as to be nearly undetectable. At the most concrete level, clerics used specific hymns from specific services to construct their tales. They drew on songs about Roman emperors to create stories about Vladimir and Olga. They praised Boris and Gleb with the exact language used to praise other wonder-working brothers. They described baptism scenes by borrowing the words and prayers of the actual baptism rites. But in other places, extensive philological analysis has demonstrated that liturgy influenced the text at a much deeper level. The martyrdom of Boris and Gleb was modelled on the rites of preparation and consecration of the Eucharist. The large-scale conception of the founding of Christianity in Rus was based on the rites for founding a new cathedral.

Perceptions of the past flowed out of the church services, into the clerical imagination, and then into native history books. But this was only the first part of the journey and the halfway point on the path to canonization. A chronicle passage was not a church book, and a baptism tale was not a hymn. The Rus had appeared in the historiographical past, but they had yet to appear in the liturgical past. They had yet to celebrate services for native saints. The Rus remained absent from the liturgical calendar, and they were therefore absent from the sacred history broadcast each and every day through the divine services.

The pieces were now in place for this to change. All that was required was the passage of time. The first chroniclers attended the liturgy,

internalized the traditional paradigms, and composed their tale. Years passed and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the work faded from memory. A new generation appeared, internalized the liturgical paradigms, and copied and edited the tale. More time passed. A third generation arose, then a fourth, and so on. Christianity in Rus continued to grow and mature. New churches and monasteries were built. Additional scribes were trained and new writings commissioned. Chronicle-keeping expanded from Kiev to Novgorod and later to Pskov, Galicia, and Rostov. Historiography spread across the land of Rus and the native myth of origins spread with it. The conversion narrative about Vladimir and his kin was copied and re-copied and re-copied, at monastery after monastery, in city after city, until it became the standard introduction to nearly every chronicle compiled in the East Slav lands.

The popularity of the tale was probably linked to its liturgical origins. Wherever the myth spread, regardless of the period or location, the liturgical rites had prepared the ground beforehand. Later generations copied down the stories about Vladimir and Olga, and Boris and Gleb, and instantly recognized that these were no ordinary tales. They were the native narratives for which the clerics had been waiting. They were the sacred stories their hearts had been prepared long in advance to believe, since constant contact with the liturgy had taught these men exactly what a myth of national conversion should look like. They were conditioned to expect a particular narrative template, and as we have seen over the course of this study, the native myth fit that template almost exactly. The reason for this should by now be clear: the chronicle tale matched the liturgical paradigm because that paradigm had been its model in the first place. Liturgy trained the first chroniclers to write the myth of Christian origins, and it trained later chroniclers to recognize in that myth the prerequisites for the first native saints. Had Vladimir and Olga not done the deeds of Saints Constantine and Helena? Had Boris and Gleb not endured their passion as Christ endured his? To minds awash in liturgical worship, the sanctity of these local heroes was self-evident. Their lives mirrored the lives of the saints, and so they rightly deserved to appear alongside them in the choir of the just.

The chroniclers were uniquely positioned to facilitate this transition. If these scribes had learned certain stories while making new historiographical texts, it was certainly possible for these narratives to find their way into new liturgical texts. In this way, church books could influence history books, and history books could also influence church books. The relationship worked in both directions, and as I shall endeavour to

show in this final chapter, each of these directions contributed to the making of royal saints in early Rus.

ENTERING THE LITURGICAL PAST

The connection between chronicle-keeping and canonization can be challenging to assess for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that virtually nothing is known about the medieval eastern church's methods for adding new saints. 'We have essentially no historical witnesses of the canonization of saints', Golubinskii wrote of Byzantium in 1903. 'Not only has not a single authentic official document come down to us, if such official documents even existed, but there is not a single known secondary record, describing what took place.'[2] According to Paul Bushkovitch, the first documentary evidence of the recognition of saints in Rus is a vaguely worded letter from Patriarch John XIV of Constantinople to Metropolitan Feognost in the year 1339, in which the patriarch informed his subordinate that he should already know 'the order and the custom of the church' in such matters: 'he was to honour the healer with sacred hymns and serve him with praise, for now and the future'.[3] It therefore appears that the church council of 1547, organized by Metropolitan Makarii of Moscow, was the first time that any sort of formal procedures or official criteria for sainthood were explicitly spelled out by the Russian church.[4]

Moscow in the middle of the sixteenth century was rather far removed from Kiev in the late tenth century. Over half a millennium appears to have passed between the mass baptism under Vladimir and the appearance of the first written protocols for the glorification of saints. How can one explain this rather remarkable lack of documentation? Does it suggest the existence of unrecorded traditions, which were dutifully carried out, even if they were never written down? Or does it perhaps indicate that no universal, formal procedure for canonization had yet developed in the Christian east? For a scholar such as Golubinskii, the answer to these questions was to be found primarily by studying the period's

[2] E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatikh v Russkoi Tserkvi* (Moscow, 1903), p. 22.

[3] P. Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia* (Oxford, 1992), p. 77.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 78. On Metropolitan Makarii and the councils of 1547 and 1549, see M. Veretennikov, *Zhizn' i trudy sviatitelia Makariia, mitropolita moskovskogo i vseia Rusi* (Moscow, 2002); A. E. Musin, 'Sobory metropolita Makariia 1547–1549 gg. i problema avtoriteta v kul'ture XVI v.', in *Drevnerusskoe uskusstvo: Russkoe uskusstvo pozdnego Srednevekov'ia – XVI vek* (St Petersburg, 2003), pp. 146–65. On history writing during Makarii's prelacy, see G. Lenhoff, 'The Construction of Russian History in *Stepennaja kniga*', *Revue des etudes slaves* 76, 1 (2005), pp. 31–50; G. Lenhoff, 'How the Bones of Plato and Two Kievan Princes Were Baptized: Notes on the Political Theology of the *Stepennaja kniga*', *Die Welt der Slaven*, 46, 2 (2001), pp. 313–30.

hagiographical works. The church historian detected a fairly consistent set of practices in these texts, which he believed to have been employed by the clerics of early Rus in their efforts to determine a candidate's saintliness. In his mind, the performance of miracles was the only absolute requirement for being glorified by the medieval church in Rus. The process Golubinskii envisaged was therefore significantly less systematized than that of the church in western Europe, which by the early twelfth century had already established clear canonical procedures for the addition of new saints, whose status was ultimately determined by the Pope of Rome.[5]

Golubinskii's reconstructed scheme assumed the following form. A holy person lived and died, after which miracles occurred at the gravesite or in the local vicinity. These miracles eventually prompted an official ecclesiastical investigation, usually undertaken by the local bishop, during which time the relics of the holy person were often discovered to be incorrupt. This combination of events eventually convinced the authorities of a figure's status as a saint, and an annual feast day was appointed on the day of their falling asleep or on the day that their relics were discovered. A liturgical office, a vita, and an icon were subsequently created for the saint's new feast. Lastly, the new festal liturgy was celebrated, within the church housing the saint's relics or somewhere nearby, and it was this service which constituted the act of official glorification.[6]

Golubinskii's version of the canonization process remains influential, although it is far from universally accepted. Many of his assumptions have been adopted and modified by Gail Lenhoff, for instance, in her work on Boris and Gleb, and Fedor the Black. Like her predecessor, Lenhoff generally accepts the story that the church told about its own saints, and she similarly accords a great deal of significance to the performance of miracles.[7] Bushkovitch, on the other hand, is more sceptical of Golubinskii's insistence on miracles. He also resists the notion that the glorification of saints proceeded according to a consistent and identifiable set of procedures, at least in the period before Makarii's councils of the

[5] On the canonizing of saints in various regions of Europe, see A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 11–59; S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 74–95, 234–52; D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 215–39; C. Galatariotou, *The Making of a Saint: The Life, Times, and Sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 205–60; G. Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 43–63, 114–54, 367–411. M. C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2008), pp. 21–47.

[6] Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatikh*, pp. 3–16, 40–43.

[7] G. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (Columbus, 1989), pp. 45–53. G. Lenhoff, *Early Russian Hagiography: The Lives of Prince Fedor the Black* (Wiesbaden, 1997), pp. 15–17, 204–208.

mid-sixteenth century.[8] For all of their differences, however, almost every scholar of medieval Rus has shared at least one assumption in common: they have seen liturgical commemoration as the final step, the crowning achievement, of the canonization process. But they have accorded no role to liturgy before this climactic moment. Researchers such as Golubinskii and Francis Butler have stated outright that canonization meant to enter into the menology, to have one's own feast in the liturgical books, yet they have never indicated that liturgy itself played any role in this process.[9] In their reconstructed schemes, glorification seems very much to be the result of a calculated decision-making procedure, inspired by miracles, and verified first by local bishops and then later by the office of the metropolitan. A liturgical office was composed in honour of a saint at the very end of an official investigation. There was no suggestion that generations of liturgical worship might have been the reason that such an investigation was launched in the first place.

I do not mean to imply here that Golubinskii or Lenhoff's theories of canonization are necessarily inaccurate. I wish only to suggest that there is another, long-overlooked dimension to the creation of royal saints: one that is not exclusively a matter of miracles and investigations, but of narratives and ritual myth-making. Not only did the liturgical rites honour saints and praised sacred dynasties after they were already officially venerated, but on the contrary, the liturgical rites were also responsible for the making and maintaining of these talismanic figures: first in the pages of history books and later in the pages of church books.

Let us consider, for instance, the medieval hymnography from the Feast of Saint Vladimir the Great, which was celebrated in Rus every year on 15 July. The precise date of the prince's canonization is unknown and highly controversial, with scholars suggesting a number of possibilities, ranging from as early as the eleventh century to as late as the fourteenth.[10]

[8] Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia*, pp. 75–80.

[9] Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatikh*, pp. 42–43. F. Butler, *Enlightener of Rus': The Image of Vladimir Sviatoslavovich across the Centuries* (Bloomington, 2002), p. 57.

[10] On the canonization of Prince Vladimir, see M. Slavnitskii, 'Kanonizatsiia sv. kniazia Vladimira i sluzhby emu po spiskam XIII–XVII v. s prilozheniem dvukh neizdannykh sluzhb po rukopisiam XIII i XVI', *Strannik* (1888), pp. 200–208; Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatikh*, pp. 63–64; G. Fedotov, 'Kanonizatsiia sviatogo Vladimira', in *Vladimirskii sbornik: V pamiat' 950-letiia Kreshcheniia Rusi, 988–1938* (Belgrade, 1938), pp. 188–96; L. Müller, *Zum Problem des hierarchischen Status und der jurisdiktionellen Abhängigkeit der russischen Kirche vor 1039* (Münster, 1959), pp. 50–52; J. Fennell, 'The Canonization of Saint Vladimir', in Wolfgang Heller (ed.), *Tausend Jahre Christentum in Rußland: Zum Millenium der Taufe der Kiever Rus'* (Göttingen, 1988), pp. 299–304. N. S. Seregina, *Pesnopeniia russkim sviatym: Po materialam rukopisnoi pevcheskoi knigi XI–XIV vv.* (St Petersburg, 1994), pp. 67–70; N. I. Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir i kreshchenie Rusi: Drevneishie pis'mennye istochniki* (St Petersburg, 2008), pp. 149–60, 206–11. Butler, *Enlightener of Rus'*, pp. 58–71.

The earliest surviving liturgical office for the saint is preserved in a parchment manuscript of the fourteenth century, RNB Sof. 382. Another early redaction of the service may also be found in the so-called 'Miscellany of Matvei Kusov', which dates to the year 1414.[11] This manuscript contains the oldest surviving version of the troparion of the feast, a hymn which readers first encountered in the opening pages of this study, when it was chanted during the consecration ceremony for a monument of the prince in Moscow in 2016:

Оуподобибыи сѧ купчю ищющю добраго бисера. славнодержавныи Владимире. на высоте стола сѣдѧ. мт҃ре градово(м). бо҃спа(с)наго Киева. и испытаꙗ посылаше къ Ц(с)рскому граду. оувѣдѣте православную вѣру. и обрѣте бесцѣнныи бисеръ Х(с)а. избравшаго тѧ ꙗко вторага Павла ѿрѧсша слѣпоту. въ ст҃ѣи купѣли. дш҃вную вкупѣ и телесную. тѣм же празднуем ти оуспение. люди твои суще. моли сп(с)ти сѧ державы ти Ру(с)кыꙗ началникомъ. х(с)олюливымъ кн҃земъ. и множьству владомыхъ.[12]

You were like a merchant seeking a fine pearl, O glorious sovereign Vladimir. Sitting on the throne of the divinely saved Kiev, the mother of cities, you tested [the faiths] and sent envoys to the Imperial City, to behold the orthodox faith. You thereby found Christ, the priceless pearl, who chose you as a second Paul, and washed away your spiritual and physical blindness in the holy font. We, your people, therefore celebrate your falling asleep. Pray that the leaders of Rus, the Christ-loving princes, may be saved, together with the multitude entrusted to them.

The themes and images in this hymn are nothing short of astonishing: Kiev, the testing of the faiths, envoys in Constantinople, a miraculous healing from blindness in the baptismal font, an explicit typological comparison to the apostle Paul. It is not difficult to see that the story being told in this hymn was precisely the story that was first formulated by the authors of the *Rus Primary Chronicle*. The same was also true of many other hymns in the prince's office, moreover, such as the following song, chanted in the eighth tone:

Новыи Костѧтнинъ ты бы(с). Х(с)а въ ср(д)ці приимъ. просвѣтилъ еси хр҃щніемъ. землю Ру(с)скую. тѣмь ꙗко Г(с)нѧ ап(с)ла. молебными пѣ(с)ми празднующе памѧ(т) твою. вѣнча похвалныꙗ приносимъ ти гл҃ще. Радуи сѧ дѣлателю вѣры Х(с)вы. имъ же избывше тмы свѣ(т) познахомъ. Ра(д)уи сѧ блж҃ныи Володимире. приимыи вѣнець ѿ руки Вседержителѧ Ба҃. и моли(с) непрестанно за дш҃а наша.[13]

[11] On the history of the liturgical services for Saint Vladimir, see N. I. Miliutenko and V. V. Vasilik, *Vladimir Sviatoi i kreshchenie Rusi: Otrazheniia v gimnografii* (St Petersburg, 2015).

[12] Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir*, p. 492. [13] *Ibid.*, p. 492–93.

You were a new Constantine. Having accepted Christ into your heart, you enlightened the Russian land with baptism. Wherefore, as an apostle of the Lord, we celebrate your memory with prayerful songs and bring you a crown of praise, saying: Rejoice, O servant of the faith of Christ, by whom we have been delivered from darkness and came to know the light. Rejoice, O blessed Vladimir, who has received a crown from the hand of God Almighty. Pray unceasingly for our souls.

The third ode of the matins canon was another place where the hymnography clearly reproduced the narrative found in the text of the chronicle:

Иже Паоула просвѣтомь. избраньствомь сподоби. и Василиꙗ вкупѣ оц҃а рускаго. очьныи недугъ отьрлъ еси Мл(с)тве. Твоим кр҃щниемь.

You, O merciful One, chose Paul and returned his sight. [In like manner, You] have also healed Vasilii, the father of Rus, of an ailment of the eyes through Your baptism.

Костѧнтина вѣрнаго подобникъ ꙗви сѧ. Х(с)а въ ср(д)ци въсприимъ. и Его заповѣди. ꙗко же от҃ць всеꙗ Руси наѹчилъ еси.

You were shown to be an imitator of the faithful Constantine, by accepting Christ and His commandments into your heart. Like a father, you have therefore instructed all of Rus.

Бже(с)твною волею Твоею. безбожнаго Перуна. и кущу бѣсовьскую съкруши. и къ опаши коньстии привѧзавъ, і повелѣ бити воиномъ идолы.[14]

By your divine will, you trampled the godless Perun and his demonic host. And having attached [it] to the back of a horse, you commanded soldiers to pummel the idols.

The earliest services for Princess Olga, which date to the fifteenth century, exhibited much the same tendency.[15] At her annual feast day, celebrated on the eleventh of June, clerics gathered at vespers and sang the following sticheron at 'Lord, I have cried':

ꙗко слн҃це возсїа на(м). преславнаꙗ памѧт ѡлги бг҃ом(д)рыа, мт҃ре кнѧѕеи рѹскы х(с)ва оучн҃ца. аггл҃ьскы(м) оученїемь въспитана. възможе на коумиры, паче же на дїавола. силою ст҃го дх҃а просвѣщаєма, ѿ тмы неразоумїа, всю страноу люди къ бг҃оу привела еси. єгоже моли ѡ творѧщи твою памѧть.[16]

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 481.

[15] On the historical development of this service, as well as a critical edition of the texts, see O. V. Svetlova, 'Sluzhba na pamiat' kniagini Ol'gi po stareishemu spisku', *Trudy Instituta russkogo iazyka im. V. V. Vinogradova*, 5 (2015), pp. 333–67.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 347–48.

The most glorious memory of the most godly wise Olga, the mother of Rus princes and disciple of Christ, has shone upon us like the sun. Raised on angelic teachings, she trampled upon idols as upon the devil. Enlightened by the strength of the Holy Spirit, you guided all of the land's people to God from the darkness of ignorance. Pray to Him for those who celebrate your memory.

The contents of this hymn repeated several of the themes and images found in the panegyric for the princess in the chronicle account. Other hymns in the princess' office, such as the third ode of the canon, recounted more precise historical details, such as her visit to Constantinople in 955:

Нынѣ ѩко пчела доброразоумива. далече цвѣтоущее. х(с)вы вѣры възыскаѩ поро(д)ны(м) крщ҃енїемь, въ цр҃ьстѣ(м) градѣ ѡбрѣтши, своемоу род8 и люде(м) предасть. єгоже вси насыщени, горести грѣха ѿбѣгае(м).[17]

Like a bee that knows the ultimate good, you sought the faith of Christ, blossoming far away. Having acquired heavenly baptism in the Imperial City, you gave it to your kin and people. Satisfied thereby, we all escape the bitterness of sin.

The ninth ode of the canon, meanwhile, reminded worshippers of the princess' connection to later figures and events in the Christianization of Rus:

Празднѫим свѣтло памѧть ч(с)тнаго кнѧзѧ владимера. прїимшаго баню крещенїа бъ корсоуни. просвѣщешаго землю роу(с)скоу. егоже вси дне(с) пѣсньми похвалим достоино, аки новаго костѧнтина съ блаженою ѡлгою. подвигнета всѧ аг҃глы же, и архаг҃глы. пр(о)р(о)кы и ап(с)лы, и всѧ мчн҃кы, молитесѧ за поющаѩ ва(с).[18]

We brightly celebrate the memory of the honourable Prince Vladimir, who accepted the washing of baptism in Cherson, and enlightened the Rus land. Wherefore, we all worthily praise him with songs, like a new Constantine, together with the blessed Olga. All of the angels and archangels, prophets and apostles, and all of the martyrs exult. Pray for those who hymn you.

The relationship between historiography and hymnography was slightly more complicated in the case of Saints Boris and Gleb. In the preceding chapter, I noted that the earliest service for the two brothers, the office of Metropolitan John, contained only a few passing references to the historical events described in the chronicle tale. The canon mentioned the spears which had pierced Boris's body and the location of Gleb's corpse, but little else. The liturgical services for the martyred

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 351. [18] *Ibid*, p. 364.

brothers therefore appear to contradict my theory, since they were based primarily on the hymnography for earlier Byzantine saints, and not on the chronicle passage. If one examines the issue more closely, however, it quickly becomes apparent that the liturgical tradition surrounding Boris and Gleb was indeed influenced by the chronicle passage. Turning to a later, second redaction of the service, which survives in a twelfth-century Sticherarion from Novgorod, one discovers that the historical and biographical information about the two brothers had already expanded significantly:

Придѣте, новокрьщении русьстии собори, и видимъ како без вины судъ приемлеть мученикъ Борись, завистию братьнею: копиемь тѣло его прободоша и кръви пролитие сътвориша отъ наважения дияволя; Глѣбии же от тогоже брата Святополъка ножьмь зарѣзанъ бысть и межю дъвѣма колодами съкровенъ, нъ сия вѣньчастася, а онъ бес памяти погыбе. Сия же Христа Бога молита о съпасении душь нашихъ.

Come, newly christened congregations of Rus, and we shall see how the innocent Boris submits to judgement by his brother's envy. His body was pierced with a spear, and his blood was shed at the devil's instigation. Gleb was cut down with a knife at the command of that same brother, Sviatopolk, and his body hidden between two tree trunks. But these brothers [received] a crown, while he died in obscurity. They [both] pray to the Lord Christ for the salvation of our souls.

Егда на поли Льтьстьмь стояще, къняже Борисе, напрасно приступиша оружьници незнаеми, посълани отъ брата твоего Святопълка, видя же приставьникъ твои копие, на прободение устроено, нападе на пьрси твои, въпия: обаче оли мене прободъше, толи мои господинъ, еже и сътвориша безаконьнии, прободъше исквозѣ того, тя продобоша, къняже.[19]

When you camped on the field by the Al'ta River, Prince Boris, armed men sent by your brother Sviatopolk approached you without warning. When your retainer saw the lance with which you were to be stabbed, he fell upon your breast, crying: 'Until you pierce me, you shall not pierce my master.' And this they did, the lawless ones: having pierced him [the retainer], they then pierced your body, O prince.

Looking at these hymns, it is evident that the medieval hymnography devoted to Boris and Gleb ultimately supports my argument and does not refute it. For what the two earliest redactions of the brothers' liturgical office preserve are the traces of two different approaches to ritual commemoration: one that occurred quickly from the top down and another

[19] *ZhBG*, ed. D. I. Abramovich (Petrograd, 1916), pp. 146, 149.

that took shape more gradually, as a result of decades and decades of copying chronicles and singing hymns. The office of Metropolitan John, as we learned in the previous chapter, was very probably composed shortly after the brothers were murdered, as part of a canonization campaign spearheaded by the inner circle of Prince Iaroslav. The Novgorodian redaction, on the other hand, was composed at least a century later, by which time the liturgical paradigms contained in the chronicle tale had been recognized by the bookmen in Rus. The details of the murder from the chronicle tale could subsequently be incorporated into their liturgical office, since it was clear that the native story reproduced the narrative template of more ancient Byzantine feasts.

Examining the evidence as a whole, therefore, the medieval hymnography for Vladimir and his kin indicates that an important, and hitherto undiscovered, process had taken place in Rus, in the first few centuries after the conversion. The baptismal rites of the Byzantine church had informed the story of Olga's baptism, and this story later became a part of her liturgical office. The episcopal prayers said during the divine liturgy had helped to inspire the chronicle accounts for Vladimir, which had in turn helped to inspire some of the hymns chanted on his feast day. The Eucharistic rites had shaped the writing of the chronicle tale of Boris and Gleb, which then subsequently shaped the writing of their early liturgical offices. Hymns became history and became hymns again. Prayers became the written past and became prayers again. This is the liturgical-historiographical-liturgical loop mentioned briefly at the outset of this book, and it was this loop that ultimately permitted select members of the Rurikid dynasty to enter into the liturgical past.

By no later than the fifteenth century, Christians in the land of Rus stood in churches named for Saints Boris and Gleb and celebrated services for Saint Olga and Saint Vladimir. The myths they sang at those services were the very myths constructed in Kiev over three centuries earlier:

> Приидите стецемся вси в честней памяти отца русскаго, наставника нашегоВладимира: сей бо от язык родися, и возлюби Возлюбльшаго и Христа, к Немуже взыде радуяся, с праматерию своею Ольгою. Вся бо люди своя научи веровати, и покланятися в Троице Единому Богу, идолы же разрушив попра, и израсти нам свои честнеи леторасли, Бориса и Глеба. Темже и мы светло ныне песньми память их верно чтуще, любовию празднуем: да молятся о нас ко Господу: [князем нашим] подати победы на поганыя врази, и умирити весь мир, и спасти душы наша.[20]

[20] Miliutenko, *Sviatoi ravnoapostol'nyi kniaz' Vladimir*, pp. 490–91.

Come, let us assemble in the honoured memory of Vladimir, the father of Rus and our instructor. For he was born of heathens, and came to love Christ who loved him, to Whom he has gone, rejoicing with his foremother Olga. He taught all his people to believe and worship one God in Trinity; he destroyed the idols, trampling them underfoot, and nurtured for us Boris and Gleb, his precious posterity. Therefore we now joyfully and faithfully honour their memory with songs, and celebrate the feast with love. May they pray to the Lord to grant victory to our princes over their pagan adversaries; to grant peace to the whole world, and to save our souls.

The liturgical loop was now complete. The brothers, father, and great grandmother of Prince Iaroslav the Wise were canonized saints, with their own feast days and their own liturgical services. The Rus had at last emerged in universal history, and the rites of the church had guided them there every step of the way.

THE POLITICS OF LITURGY

Only a few centuries earlier, Kiev had been a rough-and-tumble river town, populated with a heterogeneous mix of ethnicities and identities, ruled by a clan of pagan Scandinavians. Now members of that clan appeared side by side with Abraham, Jesus Christ, and Constantine the Great in liturgical history. This was a remarkable transformation, and it had little to do with miracles and mystical feelings. On the contrary, the entrance of the dynasty into the liturgical past was the culmination of a centuries-long process that started the moment East Roman rites were celebrated in the land of Rus. Whether he realized it or not, when Vladimir the Great adopted the Byzantine faith, he thereby agreed to install a powerful Roman storytelling technology throughout his realm.

Liturgical storytelling was not an end in itself, however. The rites sang of mythic origins, but their main purpose was to foster political cohesion in the here and now.[21] Like waves breaking upon the shore, slowly shaping the coastline, the liturgical rites washed over the hearts and minds of the heterogeneous population and slowly united them into a single imagined community. At the apex of this community, at the pinnacle of the power structure, stood the sacred dynasty who had imported and financed the rites from the very beginning. The Rurikids invested heavily in Roman religious infrastructure and it proved well

[21] J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 28–33.

worth the costs. Nowhere was this better exemplified than at the church of Holy Wisdom, Saint Sophia. In generation after generation, the citizens of Kiev entered this great cathedral, made their ritual obeisance, and proceeded into the nave to pray. Once inside, they were enveloped in a profoundly hierarchical vision of heaven and earth. Christ the Pantocrator, flanked by four archangels and the four evangelists, looked down upon them from the main cupola. The monumental figure of the Virgin Orans, shimmering in gold and blue, blessed them from the chancel. Below her, the twelve apostles received communion from the hands of Christ, and below them, covering nearly every inch of the walls and pillars, were radiant frescoes of the saints.

The worshippers stood in the midst of this heavenly host and experienced the liturgical past. When the services ended, and the faithful turned to leave, they were met with one final image. On the walls opposite the chancel, above the doors of the church, was a fresco of Christ enthroned. To the right, Prince Vladimir was depicted with Prince Iaroslav and his sons. To the left, Princess Olga was drawn next to Princess Irene, the wife of Iaroslav, and their daughters.[22] The cathedral's iconography therefore expressed in colours and images what the church books and chronicles expressed in words. The Rurikid dynasty was now a part of sacred liturgical mythology. They had found a place alongside the kings, apostles, and martyrs on the brightly painted walls. Thus, they had found a place in God's unfolding plan for the salvation of the world.

The political implications of this change in status are not difficult to discern. Canonization made the dynasty's grip on power all but unchallengeable. The icons clearly showed Christ blessing Vladimir and his descendants. The liturgical services clearly recounted God's interventions on behalf of the ruling clan. It was no secret whose side the Lord was on. Although these stories had coalesced in chronicle form, they were now chanted at church just like the stories about Moses, the Virgin Mary, and the twelve apostles. The Rurikids had entered the sacred past and become a sacred dynasty, and thus the legitimacy of their rule was beyond question. The faithful did not argue about the parting of the Red Sea, and so they did not argue about the calling of Vladimir. They did not doubt the Virgin birth, and so they did not doubt the dynasty's autocratic power.

22 S. Simmons, 'Rus Dynastic Ideology in the Frescoes of the south Chapels in St Sophia, Kiev', in Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki, and Lorenzo M. Bondioli (eds.), *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 207–25. For an alternative reconstruction of the now badly damaged fresco, see A. Poppe, 'The Building of the Church of St Sophia in Kiev', *Journal of Medieval History*, 7, 1 (1981), pp. 15–66.

The liturgy broadcast these native myths in exactly the same way as it broadcast the biblical and Byzantine ones. There was no break in the singing, no break in the narrative pattern, and thus no discernible break in the march of sacred history. The Rurikids reigned in Rus for the same reason that David and Solomon reigned in Israel, Christ reigned in heaven, and Constantine reigned in Rome. They were the chosen of God.

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